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**POLITICAL/BUREAUCRATIC DECISION-MAKING:
THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FIRST UNIVERSITY COLLEGES
IN BRITISH COLUMBIA**

BY
DAVID WILLIAM POOLE ©

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY
OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL POLICY STUDIES

EDMONTON, ALBERTA
FALL, 1994



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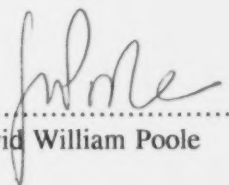
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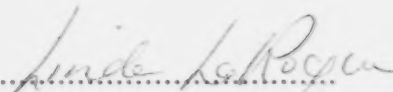
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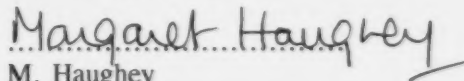
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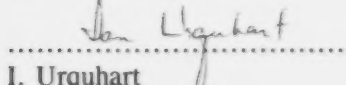
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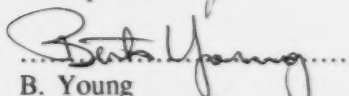
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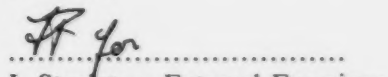

.....
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.....
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.....
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ABSTRACT

This study consists of an examination of the decision-making process that led to the establishment of three university colleges in British Columbia in 1989. To scrutinize that process, the study relates the perceptions and positions of key participants--cabinet ministers, senior bureaucrats, and college presidents--who contributed to the university college decision and offers comments on and analysis of that input.

In addressing the question of whether in the establishment of the initial three university colleges in British Columbia there were, in addition to the "public" process of decision-making, other less obvious but potentially equally important political and bureaucratic routines that impacted policy outcomes, several questions were posed. These included: What are the considerations of political leaders in deciding on policy initiatives? To what extent do senior officials consider the political imperatives of politicians in recommending policy initiatives and/or implementation strategies? What are the impacts, if any, on policy outcomes of the intrusion of electoral politics into the policy decision-making process?

None of the answers to these questions proved definitive. Yet there is

clear suggestion that some of the basic arguments of public choice theory would seem not to apply in this particular case. It is suggested that the motivation of politicians in making decisions is not vote-maximization but is more probably based on the need for immediate self-gratification and continuing confirmation that they are "doing the right thing." Insight is also provided into issues of trust between politicians and bureaucrats and the impact of college presidents on an institutional focus. Finally, a number of potential areas for further research, such as the many aspects of cabinet/caucus/bureaucratic interaction, are highlighted.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Historically, in Canada, only universities have had the authority to grant degrees. In recent years however, there has been pressure on government to increase the number of institutions with degree-granting status. Initially, such authority was extended exclusively to private colleges, particularly in Ontario, Alberta, and British Columbia. More recently however, as the debate over both the most appropriate infrastructure for degree-granting and the accessibility of higher education has intensified, the pressure to allow community colleges to grant degrees has increased. Interestingly, the question of access has been primarily a political issue as the bureaucracy has been more likely to focus on "projections of enrolment demands" (Berdahl, 1971, p. 88) or "space utilization" (Kaiser, 1980 p. 94).

To date, despite considerable pressure and continuing debate, Alberta and Ontario have resisted the representations of several college communities arguing for degree-granting authority. Since frequently these arguments have been based only on a desire to "achieve increased stature" (May & Smith, 1992), there has been considerable disagreement within each province as to the appropriateness of

such a move (Montgomerie, 1990). In British Columbia however, with little apparent dissension or controversy, the government, in March, 1989, designated three colleges as degree-granting institutions and named them university colleges. At the same time the government announced support in principle for a fourth university in Prince George.

Personal Background

For over thirty years I have been active in politics. I have participated in election campaigns at every level within the Canadian system. My involvement has ranged from "envelope-stuffer" through both constituency and provincial campaign manager to actually being a successful candidate in an Ontario school board election. Needless to say, throughout this period I have been an eager observer of politics and politicians.

Most recently, from 1986 through 1988, I was able as both political advisor and deputy minister to Premier W. Vander Zalm of British Columbia to observe elements of government operation normally closed to non-elected officials. I was present for all but one of the "politics-only" discussions of the provincial cabinet and sat in on most of the Premier's private conversations with ministers. In addition, I frequently was the sole person accompanying the

Premier on official out-of-province trips. In this role of primary adviser and confidant I was privy to numerous meetings and conversations with other provincial Premiers and the Prime Minister. I also had occasion to attend private sessions with several foreign political leaders. This remarkable opportunity allowed me to observe the role of what was frequently "partisan political discussion" in decision-making.

As the senior bureaucrat within the BC public service I chaired the committee of deputy ministers and was responsible to the Premier and cabinet for the effective administration of government operations. This involved both the preparation and presentation of advice and recommendations prior to cabinet decisions and the eventual implementation of those decisions, once taken. As with my political role, the position of deputy minister to the Premier allowed me a unique perspective. I was able to not only observe but actually affect the interaction between officials and politicians in the course of the decision-making process and once again see the partisan aspects involved throughout.

I called upon this experience in the BC government, which incidently preceded the time period under review in this study, to complete the project for my Master's degree at the University of Victoria. My study undertook to

examine the political and bureaucratic perspectives of the rather extensive review of public education that had been conducted in BC in the mid-1980's. This research (Poole, 1992) only added to my continuing fascination both with the impact of partisan ideology and electoral survival on decisions affecting both policy development and implementation, and the rather intriguing relationship between politicians and bureaucrats when it came to accommodating electoral politics in the establishment of government policy.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the process that led to the 1989 decision to establish three university colleges. Given my previous research (Poole, 1992) and personal experience as a senior government official in British Columbia, I came to this study from a particular perspective. I believed that such a decision was in all probability politically motivated and I was intrigued how the public process and this private process intersected. Hence, a number of questions were of interest: What are the considerations of political leaders in deciding on policy initiatives? To what extent do senior officials consider the political imperatives of politicians in recommending policy initiatives and/or implementation strategies? What are the impacts, if any, on policy outcomes of the intrusion of electoral politics into the policy decision-making process? These

questions were addressed with specific reference to the BC government's decision to establish university colleges and support a fourth university.

Significance of the Study

This study should contribute to the base of knowledge describing the decision-making routines of democratic governments. It will offer insight not only into the motivations of politicians in making decisions but also into the role of the bureaucracy and its relationship with the political leadership. Furthermore, the study does provide some observations on the relative influence of various individual and group lobbying strategies on governmental policy decisions.

This study will also be of interest to those who find it necessary to interact with government to obtain information, support, or a specific decision. Both directly and indirectly, it should increase awareness of those tactics which are more likely to influence a favourable outcome for those approaching government.

This research does not profess to be a detailed investigation of the educational implications inherent in the establishment of university colleges. However the reader may glean from the historical information provided and from some of the comments offered by various key stakeholders, some insight into the

educational arguments put forward in the course of the decision-making process.

Background

Since the early 1960s in British Columbia, not unlike many other jurisdictions, there has been continuing concern about the increasingly limited access of rural citizenry to post-secondary education. Macdonald (1962), in a report examining the future of Higher Education in British Columbia, clearly identified the need for diversification of opportunity "both in respect to the kinds of educational experience available and the places where it can be obtained" (p. 19). This report provided the stimulus for further government studies and enquiries into the appropriate nature and structure of higher education in BC.

For 25 years after the Macdonald Report various developments occurred: research universities expanded, including the opening of Simon Fraser University in 1965, the University of Victoria in 1963, and the continued efforts to sustain Notre Dame University originally opened in 1950; an Open Learning Agency was created in the late 1970's which provided college and university courses through distance education; community colleges expanded. Nevertheless, the Winegard Commission on University Programs in Non-Metropolitan Areas, a government report published in 1976, also recommended greater access to post-secondary

education and that university programs be offered in the Okanagan, Prince George, and Nelson areas. Yet even with all this activity, the greatest opportunity for access to higher education, both in diversity and availability, was in the lower mainland and southern Vancouver Island. It was to this disparity in access that the new government of William Vander Zalm turned its attention subsequent to the provincial election of 1986.

Challenged by the Premier, on the very day the cabinet was sworn in, to address as a priority (along with student financing) the question of post-secondary access, the new Minister of Advanced Education, Mr. Stan Hagen, established a series of regional access committees that in turn reported to a provincial steering committee. This last committee was charged with preparing a report for the Minister outlining possible solutions to the problems of higher education access. The committee report entitled Access to Advanced Education and Job Training in British Columbia was published in September, 1988. One of the several recommendations included in the report was the establishment of "an upper-level university college component in the more densely populated college regions outside the lower mainland and south Vancouver Island" (p. 16). In March, 1989 the government announced the designation of three community colleges located in Kelowna, Kamloops, and Nanaimo as university colleges, with

no specific recommendation for Prince George. The announcement contained few details. Issues such as governance, funding, and the definition of scholarly activity were not addressed. Beginning the following September, they were to offer, under the auspices of the three BC research universities, full undergraduate degree programs.

This study examines the nature of both the "public" and "private" processes that led to the March, 1989 decision, with particular interest in the political aspects of these processes. To set the stage for this examination a brief comment on British Columbia politics follows.

British Columbia Politics

There can be little argument that politics in British Columbia are polarized. Mitchell (1987) insists this is a clear legacy of W.A.C. Bennett, who served as Premier from 1952-1972, winning seven consecutive elections during that period. It was Bennett who "deliberately promoted the two party system . . . establishing Social Credit as the province's only private enterprise party, the alternative to socialism" (p. 17). Even with the gains of the provincial Liberal Party in the election of 1991 (the Liberals became the official opposition with Social Credit relegated to minority status), the polarization continued. The

electorate, although angered by the behaviour of the previous Socred government, understood the choice was still between a socialist and a free enterprise approach.

Similar to the ideological polarization is the disparity in the nature of politics and politicians between Vancouver/Victoria and the rest of the province (Mitchell, 1987). This is not only a rural-urban conflict but a fundamental power struggle between those who are perceived to have power and those who wished they did. As a result there is an abiding tension between the elected representatives from the lower mainland and Victoria and the remainder of the province. This tension often manifests itself in heated debates, often recorded in Hansard (a verbatim record of the proceedings of the legislature) but more frequently reported in the press about equality of services available in various regions, particularly in education and health care. Government attempts at resolution of such debates are directly influenced by the relative strength politically of regional MLAs and I would suggest frequently include policy decisions and resource allocation that are primarily electorally motivated.

With this brief comment on politics in British Columbia in hand and an articulation of the focus of this research, it is important to review existing literature in those areas appropriate to the study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The review of the literature in support of this research problem was focused on two areas: public choice theory and political and bureaucratic decision-making. Although much of this literature review was undertaken in anticipation of conducting this study and to offer a context (Babbie, 1986) within which the research could be conducted, a subsequent review was directed towards the illumination and expansion of the analysis and discussion section of the dissertation in response to findings which could not easily be predetermined.

Before proceeding however, a brief comment on why public choice is the focus of this research would seem in order. This study is concerned with the decision to implement a significant new direction in public policy--the establishment of three university colleges. Unlike other theories such as "environmental determinism" (Aucoin, 1979), "pluralism" (Dahl, 1961) and "neo-Marxism" (Rosenau, 1992), public choice allows for an analysis of individual motivation, a critical element of this research, in addition to policy decision-making and political/bureaucratic interaction.

Public Choice Theory

A definitive definition of public choice theory is not easily achieved. Arguments of various authors have covered a broad spectrum of opinion. In an attempt to summarize these arguments Hartle (1976) examines the works of Downs, Buchanan, Tullock, Olson, Niskanen, and Breton. The models of public choice advanced by each of these authors, Hartle suggests, include: the analysis of hypothetical parties, governments and voters by Downs; the issue of decision-making costs offered by Buchanan and Tullock; the efforts of Olson to explain the existence and organization of voluntary pressure-groups; the consideration by Niskanen of the role of the bureaucracy in the collective decision-making process; and the examination by Breton of the patterns of government expenditure and taxation. Hartle does conclude however, that each of these authors share one thing in common: "they seek to explain collective decisions in terms of the self-seeking behaviour of rational individuals" (p. 12).

Unfortunately, the various theorists are unable to come to a common understanding of the terminology applied to any description of public choice theory. The closest to an generally acceptable definition would seem to be that of Dennis C. Mueller (1979) who suggested that "public choice can be defined as the economic study of non-market decision-making or simply the application

of economics to political science" (p. 1). This definition comes from the premise that economists espouse, namely that when people come together in the political arena to make decisions they behave the same way that they do in the marketplace--that is, they act to maximize their own interests (Hartle, 1976). Furthermore, they may do this individually or by forming groups that will lobby on their behalf (Jackson, Jackson, & Baxter-Moore, 1986).

Theorists argue that these special-interest groups along with politicians and bureaucrats are the central actors in the policy-making process (Jackson, Jackson, & Baxter-Moore, 1986). Clearly the interest groups will operate to maximize their own concerns, often by preserving a "monopoly position" (Mueller, 1989, p. 311). However, public choice theory would suggest that both politicians and bureaucrats when making decisions also do so largely to satisfy their own narrow individual interests (Wade, 1983). The maximization of this interest, Hartle (1976) suggests, is different for politicians and bureaucrats.

Senior bureaucrats attempt to maximize their influence and control through the manipulation of budgets. Hartle (1976) points to the arguments of Niskanen that suggest budget maximization motivation for bureaucrats "leads them to add to the services offered, becoming less specialized . . . thereby reducing the

monopoly power of other bureaus" (p. 23). Hartle himself, however, insists that this is not the only argument. He states that influence and control is not always sought through efforts to increase a departmental or agency budget since "the most prestigious employments are in departments with relatively small budgets" (p. 95) and therefore budget fights occur only when financial support can affect "the quantity and quality of staff advisors" (p. 95).

Politicians, on the other hand, are looking to maximize votes. Hartle (1976), expanding on Downs' notion of government's allocation of expenditures to attract voters at the margin, argues that politicians will raise taxation and expenditures when the increase in votes expected in "swing" ridings exceeds the loss of votes anticipated by imposing additional costs. Within the context of this study could it be argued, based on the foregoing, that the establishment of university colleges in particular locations was determined by the swing factor in each of the constituencies affected?

Boyle (1986) offers some insight into this contention. Based on an analysis of political election trends in British Columbia and a detailed examination of the outcomes of provincial elections from 1966 through 1983 inclusive, he determined the following: only Nanaimo (the location of Malaspina University

College) could be considered swing and it only barely. The other two constituencies, Kamloops (Cariboo University College) and Okanagan South (Okanagan University College) were considered safe for the Social Credit government. Swing ridings for Boyle are those where less than a 5.99% change in the votes would give victory to the other party. Nanaimo was classified as swing for the New Democratic Party (NDP) with a swing factor of 5.9%.

The issue of swing ridings is but another element in the continuing argument of public choice theorists that the motivation of politicians (and bureaucrats) is the maximization of self-interest. This concept of self-interest is the focus of much of the criticism of public choice theory. There seems to be little agreement as to its definition. Points of view range from a narrow perspective of financial reward and well-being (Borcherding, 1977) to an all-encompassing concept of subjective net worth (Hartle, 1976). Further criticism focuses on the relationship between self-interest and power, that is, given the pursuit by so many of their respective interests, what factors determine who wins and loses?

Whatever the criticism or support, the very terminology of the debate--wins, losses, reward, well-being, power--adds fuel to the public perception of a

greedy, self-serving, indulgent politician concerned primarily with electoral success (Clarke, Jenson, Leduc, and Pammett, 1984). Even the common theme found in all applications of public choice theory, that is, that it rests upon economic reasoning (Breton & Wintrobe, 1982; Dunleavy, 1991; MacKay & Weaver, 1979) further advances this perception.

As Lovrich and Neiman (1984) suggest, "The self-interested, rational, utility-maximizing individual of economic theory can be used as a model for the politician, citizen, and public servant alike" (p. xxi). Likewise, this economic maxim and all it connotes, is fundamental in the arguments of Downs (1967) that bureaucratic officials act both rationally (i.e., as efficiently as possible) and in their self-interest, in the statements of Mitchell (1983) that successful politicians adopt policies which keep them in office, maximizing votes for re-election and in the challenges of Mueller (1989) to the ability of the electorate to articulate a broader public interest than their own self-interest.

Clearly then a fundamental question for this study was whether or not this principle of self-interest and utility-maximization was evident in the deliberations, actions, and decisions of the various stakeholders party to the establishment of the first three university colleges.

Political and Bureaucratic Decision-making

In the area of public policy development and implementation, reams of material have been published. For the purposes of this study, given the interest in the process leading to the establishment of the first university colleges in British Columbia, it was necessary to review the literature on political and bureaucratic decision-making, particularly those articles and books which pointed to the essential elements of the relationship between the politicians and the bureaucracy and their respective impact on decision-making. This relationship and its impact was of special significance since it is at the core of the questions addressed in this study.

A fundamental premise common throughout the literature is simply stated: There is an erosion of ministerial decision-making power and a corresponding increase in bureaucratic power (Langford, 1990; Morley, Ruff, Swainson, Wilson, and Young, 1983; Osbaldeston, 1989). However there is considerable disagreement as to the cause of this power shift. Is it, as Kernaghan (1978) suggests, simply a question of ministers not "having the time to run such a vast show . . . [hence] more and more is being decided by and implemented by the bureaucracy" (p.389)? Or could it be that Borins (1988) reveals a more clandestine cause when he points out that many public choice authors fear "that

politicians, interest groups, and bureaucrats collude to expand government activity . . . to the benefit of these three groups" (p. 12)?

There can be little question, as argued by Kernaghan, that as the complexity of government has increased, ministers simply do not have enough time to address all of the decisions required to maintain government services. As a result ministers have both increased their personal staffs and deferred more items to the bureaucracy (MacDonald, 1980). In BC it was argued that political mandarins working closely with ministers simply expanded the political control and decreased the amount of decision-making required of bureaucrats (Morley et al., 1983). Similarly I would suggest, this has been the "modus operandi" of more recent administrations in Ottawa (Hoy, 1987; Sharp, 1981). This approach, although occasionally the topic of some grumbling and mild discontent on the part of both senior bureaucrats and the public (Hoy, 1987), raises little significant debate and is seldom personalized. Not so with arguments for clandestine collusion.

In this case the debate is loud and personal. Egged on by public choice authors, the argument rages that in order to maximize one's self-interest a politician and/or bureaucrat must be prepared to conspire one with the other as

well as with interest groups to form what Dunleavy (1991) calls "winning coalitions" (p. 40). Such a scenario only increases the public view of a self-serving political system designed to benefit individual politicians. Their anger is most often directed at individuals by name, frequently with accusations of corruption and deliberate deceit.

However these efforts at maximizing self-interest, although equally strong, may not always be jointly devised. It may frequently be as a result of individuals, whether politician, bureaucrat, or lobbyist, being unwittingly duped into participating. Such an environment is best described in the Yes Minister and Yes Prime Minister series written by Jonathan Lynn and Antony Jay (1981; 1986).

Both of these series successfully captured the need for politicians and bureaucrats to work together for their own survival. Although cast in humorous and exaggerated terms the essence of the relationship was one of collaboration, despite initial efforts by each party to act independently. In the end there was a reliance by each party on the other's need and willingness to function in a predictable way in the exercise of their duties. Whether or not this reliance is as a result of collusion is a matter for some debate. My previous research (Poole,

1992) tended towards the conclusion that there was in fact organized collaboration.

Not all opinion is likewise inclined. Osbaldeston (1989) insists the essential element in any political-bureaucratic relationship is "trust" (p. 163). He offers a number of recommendations to improve the relationship, including "increasing ministerial authority" and the necessity for political aides to have a "training and development program" (p. 174). Trust for Osbaldeston is quite different than collaboration and suggests to him an "intimate partnership . . . not unlike marriage" (p. 24).

Sharp (1981) takes a somewhat different position on the minister/deputy minister relationship. Having served in both capacities he has a unique perspective. He tends to view the senior civil servants as the "professionals" in a seemingly "amateur/professional partnership" (p. 43). It is the deputy ministers, Sharp argues, who can offer specialized expertise and "proven administrative ability" (p. 43) when difficult problems arise within a ministry. No collusion here; simply an unevenly weighted alliance.

Summary

Overall, the literature review highlighted two specific areas to be pursued in discussion with the stakeholders interviewed: self-interest (as contained in public choice theory) as it related to decision-making by both politicians and bureaucrats and those who lobbied them; and the nature of the political/bureaucratic relationship. In addition, perusal of various sources triggered reflection on other areas such as power and influence and post-secondary education generally.

Clearly, the literature review not only affected analysis and discussion of the study's findings but it impacted on the approach used in the initial gathering of the data: what was asked, what was probed, and of whom.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The primary focus of my dissertation is the private political and bureaucratic decision-making routines which appear to parallel the generally more public process and, specifically, their impact on the development and implementation of the 1989 policy to establish university colleges in BC.

Method

This research is a case study, examining the relative impact of political/bureaucratic decision-making processes, public or private, on the decision to establish three university colleges in BC. It is a qualitative study in line with Babbie's (1986) definition of such analysis: "the nonnumerical examination and interpretation of observations, for the purpose of discovering underlying meanings and patterns of relationships" (p. 558). The orientation is postpositivist as defined by Guba (1990) in that "reality exists but can never be fully comprehended" (p. 23). In this study the "reality" of a decision to establish university colleges is a fact. However there can be no expectation that the decision and the processes leading to it can be fully understood.

Case Study Design

Why use a case study? Babbie (1986) suggests that case studies are particularly appropriate to research topics "that defy simple quantification" (p. 240). Furthermore he and Merriam (1988) both argue that this approach allows for the study of attitudes and behaviours in a natural setting. Merriam in describing four essential characteristics of case study research suggests that case studies are heuristic in that they can "illuminate a reader's understanding of a phenomenon or process" (pp. 12-13).

All of the above supports the use of a case study approach to understand political/bureaucratic decision-making. By focusing on a particular event, the establishment of three university colleges in BC, this research can examine the "subjective factors (thoughts, feelings, and desires)" (Bromley, 1986, p. 23) of the individuals involved in the decision. Furthermore, as Merriam insists it is the case study approach which allows, among other things, the "illumination of the complexities of a situation; the influences of personalities on the issue; and the presentation of the view points of different groups" (pp. 13-14).

Finally, as Olson (1982) has suggested, a case study approach was essential to establishing a specific context in which politicians and bureaucrats

could address the elements of the more general decision-making process. In my experience both groups have difficulty in discussing things in the abstract and so a specific example upon which to reflect was needed. It was anticipated, and proven accurate, that by having a particular case to review the participants were more at ease in discussing process.

Data Sources

To address both the public and private processes I have drawn on two sources: interviews with various participants and influencers of the ultimate policy decision process and personal documents provided by them.

Although it was expected that participant interviews would provide some insight into aspects of the public process, an equally invaluable resource proved to be the large number of significant institutional and government documents that exist delineating the various considerations and arguments offered in the months leading up to the decision to proceed with university colleges. These documents include background papers that detail the numerous issues impacting university colleges that were to be addressed by the cabinet, such as: funding; governance; and program orientation. Also included is correspondence exchanged between the Minister/Ministry and college presidents addressing a variety of sensitive issues

consequential to determining a final course of action. In addition a review of Hansard and select newspapers of the period provided not only an historical and environmental perspective but also some insight into key aspects of the public process.

Participants

Four members of the BC cabinet who were in office between November 1986 and July 1990 were interviewed. The choice of political interviewees deliberately included both those who held responsibility for post-secondary education and others elected in 1986 who had served as backbenchers immediately prior to elevation to the cabinet. Input from this latter group, it was expected, would offer insight into a potentially differing perspective of political decision-making since, unlike some of their colleagues, all of their political life had not been exclusively as a member of cabinet. Five senior public servants, serving in senior Ministry positions or as cabinet officials during the identified period, also were interviewed, as were the Presidents of the three designated university colleges.

The choice of these particular participants was a deliberate attempt to ensure varied representation of those involved in the decision-making process.

Interviews

Based upon my Master's research experience, I knew that the interviews with politicians needed to be somewhat informal, providing flexibility in the direction of enquiry and topics covered. They were conversational in nature focusing on two key areas: the influence of politics and/or self-interest on individual decision-making; and the relationship between politicians and bureaucrats. The interviews were structured to ensure both comparability and coverage of these important and essential areas. I was able to use a tape-recorder for all interviews, despite initial concern that the politicians particularly would be nervous about having their comments recorded (such was the case in my previous study). All but two interviews were conducted in person. The other two were telephone interviews. Given the current locations of the politicians and officials chosen for interviews and funding limitations, follow-up contacts were made by telephone.

It was anticipated that each participant would have an opportunity to review the synthesis and analysis prepared. Recognizing that politicians particularly would not as easily give of their time to review their comments as they did for initial interviews, some prompting was in order. All participants were contacted by phone to indicate the review material was on its way and then

phoned again to ask for any comments. Out of all the participants only three did not provide feedback on the material provided and this was taken as acceptance of that which they had received.

Ethical Procedures

Normally accepted routines as to confidentiality and ethical procedure were followed, including: non-identification of one participant to another and numerical coding of interview tapes and transcripts to allow "blind" transcription. In addition, as a result of several requests, I agreed to use no attributable quotes and furthermore to use very little participant quotation at all. Nevertheless, it was impossible to guarantee anonymity given the uniqueness of the subject matter and the clear affiliation of some interviewees to the particular issue. Each participant was informed of this potential lack of anonymity. Prior to commencement of the interview they were told of the purpose of the study and the particular involvement of the researcher prior to the period under review. No written consent of interviewees was sought but they were able to withdraw their participation at any time. Obviously, they could refuse to answer any of the questions asked but such refusal did not occur.

Data Analysis

Data analysis began with the reading of all documents I had collected. This was done in anticipation of the interviews to both assist in the formulation of appropriate questions and to establish a time sequence of events relating to the process under consideration.

Having conducted the interviews the transcripts were read and reread. References to the key questions of the study were marked. Subsequent rereads highlighted any items that were beyond these areas. Cross referencing was conducted to identify any variations among responses on any of the topics/themes isolated.

It was anticipated that data analysis would reveal a number of themes with respect to the political and bureaucratic processes of decision-making. What each of these themes would be was obviously not known in advance. It was reasonable however, based not only on the literature review but the persons interviewed and the structure of the interviews, to assume that motivation for decisions made (public choice theory) and political/bureaucratic relationships would emerge as critical issues. Not surprisingly such was the case. However each of these proved to be part of a larger theme: politics on the one hand and bureaucracy on

the other. In other words, the comments of participants led to the identification of issues much broader than originally suggested in the limited categories of public choice theory and political/bureaucratic relationships.

In addition, two other themes emerged from the analysis: leadership and post-secondary education. Like the previous themes identified these two rather general categorizations captured a number of critical comments by participants.

Any reference in the foregoing to participant responses and comments is not intended to suggest that the themes were necessarily found verbatim in the transcripts. However the process of analysis described was intended to minimize the intrusion of my bias into the findings. The transcripts were reviewed with the intent of identifying related responses. In the matters of politics and bureaucracy this was straightforward as questions had been directed to these two areas. However for the other two themes more subjective decisions were required.

In the first case, all comments with any reference to post-secondary matters were highlighted for possible use in the appropriate findings section. Likewise, references to power (control, authority, or similar terms), influence, and leadership were identified for potential inclusion in the leadership section.

One final comment: the comments of participants were used to stimulate discussion, both within the interviews themselves and ultimately in this research, of alternate theories as to the motivation for decision-making by politicians and the perception by others of that process.

Credibility

A continuing concern throughout the conduct of this research was the credibility of the comments provided by the participants. To this end every effort has been made to validate such comments. These efforts have included comparison to other participant responses and to documents wherever possible. Since I obtained data from three different groups, politicians, bureaucrats, and presidents, there was ample opportunity for meaningful comparisons. As indicated the documents also provided a significant corroborative source.

Frequently, reference to the reports of the popular press was of assistance in verification. However care was taken to view more than one media source thereby minimizing the possibility of a particular bias in response to a political or bureaucratic comment.

In some instances, my personal experience was helpful in verifying

comments or responses. However this intimate knowledge of both the process and, in many cases, the participants required constant diligence to avoid what Burgess (1989) calls an "intrusive potential" (p. 17). I was on the alert for my own experience colouring or altering the comments of participants. The previously mentioned triad of participants and a formal procedure for each person interviewed to review my findings aided awareness of my neutrality. Feedback has also been sought from fellow students and former colleagues in the public sector. Each of these groups has assisted in keeping the findings objective by frequently challenging conclusions attributed to participants as having been influenced by my own position.

The variety of inputs and feedback detailed above would seem to go a long way to accomplishing what Babbie (1986) suggests in a discussion of validity is the need for several different "yardsticks" (p. 114). In the end however, a sense of trust in those interviewed was applied to utilizing a comment since it was deemed important to avoid a "cyclical impasse" (Guba, 1990, p. 167-68) in determining what was true and what was false.

Delimitations

This study is delimited to the British Columbia political system, and more

specifically on one element within that system--post-secondary education. Furthermore, the focus is on a decision-making process that directly affected only three colleges within the post-secondary system. The research, therefore, must be interpreted in a particular political, social, and temporal context.

Secondly, one particular educational context--university colleges--is addressed in this study. As a result, although it is expected that the analysis and discussion of processes provided may be relevant to other institutions and jurisdictions, no such generalization is expressly claimed.

Limitations

Limitations of this study include both the restriction of data sources to representatives of key stakeholder groups and obtainable documents, and the small number of participants whose testimony about historical events, given its personal and non-recorded nature, could not be absolutely verified. In the case of documents reviewed it is impossible to ascertain that all of the relevant documentation has in fact been obtained or that which is available is entirely accurate.

In addressing the above, triangulation was achieved wherever possible by

verifying information from alternate sources, including reference to my personal experience. Every effort was made to ascertain the interpretation of others of the documents to avoid bias but it is possible that my previous government position, while affording expanded access, may have been a limitation in that people may have been somewhat circumspect about their views.

Furthermore, I embarked upon this research with two rather deeply entrenched notions: a politically motivated, private decision-making process existed; and politicians and bureaucrats collaborated on maintaining the security of their respective positions. Such notions were no doubt covertly limiting in the breadth of perspective I brought to the interviews and analysis.

The four succeeding chapters will detail the public process, the findings of the interviews conducted with politicians, bureaucrats, and college presidents, discuss those findings and summarize their implications. The organization of chapters 5 & 6 and to a lesser extent the final chapter will derive primarily from the use of four topics of review: post-secondary education; politics; bureaucracy; and leadership. The next chapter will organize its description of the public process around the detailing of: the public documents; Hansard; and selected press reports.

CHAPTER 4

THE PUBLIC PROCESS

A public process suggests that information, whether opinion or fact, affecting a specific decision is accessible to the people at large and not considered "private or secret" (Collins Universal Dictionary, 1977). For the purposes of this study the public process of interest is that which surrounds the decision on March 20, 1989 to implement three university colleges in British Columbia. To this end, although public discussion and debate on post-secondary access had occurred for decades, the particular period under review will be from Summer 1988 (the Provincial Access Committee reports) to Fall 1989 (the first three university colleges are initiated).

Before beginning that review, however, two critical historical events need to be mentioned. First, the specific initiation of the process that would lead to the March, 1989 decision occurred when the initial, post-election Vander Zalm cabinet was announced on November 6, 1986. In his cabinet announcements, which were made public, the Premier identified specific tasks for each member of his executive council. In addition to reviewing student financial assistance, the

Minister of Advanced Education was directed to recommend improvements to access to post-secondary education.

Secondly, and as result of the cabinet announcements, specific initiatives were undertaken to address the access question: in May, 1987 a senior bureaucrat in the Advanced Education ministry began to establish a broad base of information for a comprehensive study of university transfer arrangements and access to post-secondary education generally; and in January, 1988 the minister established eight regional access committees, as well as a provincial access committee, to make recommendations on all issues respecting post-secondary access. The provincial body, having assimilated the regional input, was to issue its report by September, 1988. All of the committees' deliberations were to be as public as possible.

The eight regions identified mirrored the regions included in the process of regionalization undertaken by the government primarily for economic development purposes. The skeleton infrastructure in place for each region greatly assisted in getting the regional access committees off to a fast start. It was also fortuitous that each region had at least one community college within its borders. Only two regions, Vancouver Island/Coast and Lower

Mainland/Southwest included universities.

The membership of each committee was at the discretion of the Minister. Some, including the chairs, were appointed directly by him while others were at the discretion of the institutions or organizations the minister wished to have participate. The committee chairs were all volunteers; the vice-chairs were senior administrators in post-secondary educational institutions.

The following review of the public process during the designated period will examine three sources of information that were essential in describing the public process: the documents; statements in Hansard (the verbatim transcripts of members' statements in the provincial legislature); and the reports of three BC newspapers (Vancouver Sun, Vancouver Province, Victoria Times-Colonist). A summary statement will be provided.

Public Documents

Of the 58 documents reviewed (see appendix), 50 could be categorized as public. Of those 50, however, 21 were internal government documents and although not confidential and therefore considered available for public scrutiny, access to them would have required significant awareness and persistence.

Nevertheless since, according to ministry staff interviewed, several persons beyond government did view these documents they are included as part of the public process.

Widely circulated during late August and September 1988, were the reports of the eight regional access committees and the summary report of the provincial body. Since much of the work of each committee had been conducted in public, through hearings and briefings, great pains were taken to ensure broad distribution of each report throughout the region. Likewise, the provincial report was not only submitted in its entirety to the minister and then made available to any interested group or individual, a "glossy" summary (Access To Advanced Education And Job Training in British Columbia, 1988) was prepared for extensive public distribution.

Each of these documents detailed the background and context of the report, identified priority concerns and offered specific recommendations. Included in these were a number of principles that focused on the barriers to accessibility beyond simple geography. These included economic, social, and cultural factors. This was not surprising given the largest number of briefs in each region came from groups representing the disadvantaged. Institutional briefs

were less numerous, perhaps as a result of their having direct representation on the committees.

Immediately after the release of these documents an extensive consultation process was initiated. Three teams, composed of provincial committee members, ministry staff, and academics, met with representatives of the academic and management staff of each of the provincial institutions of advanced education soliciting their feedback. This resulted in an internal, but not confidential, document detailing the consultation results.

At the same time that the provincial access report was being circulated, three other documents were being presented publicly. First was a report of the Interior University Society (a Prince George grass-roots organization formed in Fall 1987) arguing for the establishment of a full-fledged university in Prince George to serve the northern half of the province. Having received a \$100,000 grant from the Minister of State for region 5, Bruce Strachan, the Society was able to generate considerable, although not unanimous, support for a university as opposed to a university college. This recommendation was particularly potent given the continuing public opposition to the university college alternative voiced by the President of the local community college.

Second was a report of the Kelowna Chamber of Commerce stating the unequivocal consensus of the people in the Okanagan Valley in support of Okanagan College granting degrees. This report was described by a member of the Provincial Access Committee as "calm and rational and avoiding extreme positions." The economic benefits to the region of having a university college were emphasized. This approach allowed for a wide consensus in support of a position clearly in line with the minister's aspirations.

Finally was the report of the University Advisory Council, a group established by the minister early in 1987 to make recommendations with respect to the provision of university services throughout the province. This body called for cooperation among universities, colleges, and the Open Learning Agency in the delivery of university level courses but recommended against the establishment of an interior university. This position was an attempt to defend the traditional university against being used as primarily an economic stimulant. Educational needs, not economic ones should prevail, this report argued.

In addition to these reports, a key source of public information was the colleges themselves. As they vied for degree-granting authority each of the interested colleges published numerous documents in support of their position.

These included: papers prepared by faculty associations in response to guidelines for teaching upper-level university courses at the community college (prepared by the Dean of Arts and Science at the University of Victoria); administrative presentations on how best to administer degree programs; and compilations of research into relevant legislation and regulations locally and nationally.

Also of interest were press releases issued by the Minister of Advanced Education announcing the implementation of the university colleges and the related funding allocations. These were often followed by local releases from the affected college. (Actual press coverage is detailed in a later section). Likewise, several speeches were given by both the minister and the deputy minister addressing the whole matter of expanded degree-granting authority, with hard copies available for distribution. Finally, a number of college calendars and pamphlets reflecting the "new look" of the university college were readily available.

Throughout the period a significant number of internal Ministry of Advanced Education background papers were in limited, but publicly accessible, circulation. These address several topics including many attempts at developing a vision statement and defining the mission of university colleges. Also

referenced in these documents are the continuing efforts of ministry staff to delineate the necessary legislative and regulation implications of the initiative.

A number of college documents prepared for submission to the minister and/or the ministry were also in this category of limited public accessibility. These tended to be position papers on such issues as: governance as seen through the eyes of a college board; academic presentations on possible degree structures; or detailed statistical analysis of enrolment implications.

Finally, this category included several letters received by a college president from the Ministry, the universities, and other colleges responding to various papers or presentations in which the college participated. Although not intended for public consumption, they were appended to various, more widely circulated documents and hence can be considered as part of the public process.

Hansard

The Hansard of interest to this study is the record of debates of the 3rd session of the 34th parliament of British Columbia which convened in the Spring of 1989, since this is the first sitting of the house after the report of the Provincial Access Committee. Hansard provides the opportunity to review

comments of all legislators, but particularly government ministers, in the forum where policy is introduced and debated. It is most often the only official verbatim record of ministerial statements and as such does not allow for easy dismissal by them on the grounds of misquotation. Hansard is a key element in the public process as it provides an important source for holding politicians accountable for what they say.

The first reference to the university college initiative in Hansard was on March 29, 1989, nine days after the formal announcement by the minister that the province was establishing three university colleges. It was a passing comment by the Premier on the "establishment of full university degree programs in Kelowna, Kamloops, and Nanaimo" stating what a "great accomplishment" this was (p. 5761). The next day, March 30, 1989, the Minister of Finance in his budget address simply referred to "new cooperation between colleges and universities, as recently announced . . . by the Minister of Advanced Education" (p. 5768).

The only other references to the university college initiative recorded in Hansard were comments made during the debate on the budget estimates of the Ministry of Advanced Education in July, 1989. The Minister, in response to questioning by the opposition critic for education, accepted personal "credit for

the brilliant scheme [university colleges]" (p. 8345), while later giving the credit for increased post-secondary access "first and foremost to the Premier" (p. 8347).

In subsequent comments the minister indicated that the "opportunities afforded Kamloops, Kelowna, and Nanaimo were based on presentations made to government . . . including the access report, Chamber of Commerce, correspondence, and meetings that took place" (p. 8349). The minister attributed to himself simply the role of "making sure these arrangements and agreements [between universities and colleges] takes place fairly" (p. 8360). He also responded in the affirmative to the suggestion by the opposition critic that the "leadership role for university colleges was being played by Ministry staff" (p. 8360).

Press Reports

A review of press reports after the access committee reports and subsequent government announcements is important in both learning what priority was given to this initiative by media commentators and critics and in understanding that what is reported largely determines public perception. The media provide one essential element of a public process--easily accessible information. The print media are used exclusively in this study as electronic

media coverage tend to be ephemeral and transitory.

In the September 30, 1988 edition of the Vancouver Province interview comments by the Minister of Advanced Education referring to the awarding of "degree-granting status to the colleges in Kelowna, Kamloops, and Nanaimo" (p.3) are reported. Also included is the supportive reaction of one college president and the more "guarded" reaction of the Canadian Federation of Students leader.

Two weeks later in the October 14, 1988 issue of the Vancouver Sun, the President of Vancouver Community College offered glowing praise of the Access Report calling it "imaginative, constructive, and precedent-setting" (p. A10). In the same article the opposition education critic indicates he was "pleasantly surprised" by the report and encourages the government to act on the report.

No reference to the university college initiative appeared in any of the three papers reviewed until February 11, 1989 when, in a brief report, the President of the College-Institute Educators Association of BC indicated that "the faculty at BC community colleges expect to be offering students the opportunity to complete their degrees beginning in September" (p. A8).

Ten days later in the same newspaper, the President of Cariboo College indicated that "students in BC's central interior may soon be able to complete their degrees closer to home" (p. B8). In this same article the Minister of Advanced Education said he was "taking a proposal [on colleges offering degrees] to cabinet in about two weeks and will make an announcement in about a month."

On March 10, 1989 the Premier was quoted in the Vancouver Sun as having told a high school student in Oliver, BC who asked about Okanagan College granting degrees that "on the 20th of this month the Minister of Advanced Education will be making an announcement that will make you very pleased" (p. A9). The newspaper indicated the Premier refused further comment, "saying he did not want to scoop the minister's announcement" (p. A9).

The coverage of the formal announcement by the Minister on March 20, 1989 was subdued. The Vancouver Province, a morning paper, ran a brief story on page 5 anticipating the news indicating "BC colleges get their degrees today." Both the Vancouver Sun and the Victoria Times-Colonist ran reports the next day, March 21, 1989, outlining the minister's announcement that full degree programs would be established at the three colleges. The stories were brief but overwhelmingly positive, with the opposition's only criticism focusing on how

difficult it would be to implement the program by September 1989. In an editorial in the Victoria Times-Colonist on March 22, 1989, the announcement was described as a "commendable, albeit belated, recognition of the importance of higher education" (p. A4).

On September 1, 1989 the Vancouver Sun ran a piece on "the enrolment surges at the three university colleges that now had new degree programs" (p. F7). It was a positive reporting of the number of students now able to access university programs and a restatement of the province's Access For All strategy. The Vancouver Sun was the only paper of the three reviewed to run such a story.

One final note: Throughout the entire 16 months covered in this review there was but one editorial (Victoria Times-Colonist, March 22, 1989) commenting on this initiative. From the perspective of newspaper editors, this was not a controversial undertaking.

Analysis

The information available to the public as captured in the reviewed documents, Hansard transcripts, and press reports was, in the aggregate, considerable. But what sort of public process does it identify?

Clearly, given the public hearings and reporting of the access committees, the extent of press coverage and ministerial statements, and college promotion, the public process pictured could be argued to have included full collaboration and participation by a broad representation of the community in the deliberations. Assumed however, is a community that is fully informed simply because the information was available. This, even though much of available material was circulated within the educational community and was prepared frequently with only such readers in mind. There is little evidence, beyond the public meetings and summary publications of the Access committees (which might also be accused of deliberately appealing to a sophisticated educational community), that much effort was made to ensure an informed general public.

Nevertheless, the assumption was that anyone who opposed the initiative had many sources of information from which to launch a critique or challenge. None was forthcoming. As my interviews with political participants confirmed, this lack of any significant opposition to the university college proposal, given such a wealth of public information, confirmed for them universal support.

What was not shared with the public however, is the impact of personality on the process and final outcome. Perhaps if more people had known about the

role of the "renegade" college president in Prince George in fighting the university college idea, the carefully orchestrated participation of college personnel on regional committees, or the background of the "volunteer" chairs of the committees, more questions would have been raised. One final point, although detailed analysis was not done, I would argue that the public who reviewed the information was simply the public for whom it was written: the education community.

Nevertheless, the assumption of an informed general public persisted in the political/bureaucratic mind and was considered part of a collaborative, consensual decision-making process. The regional committee structure, speeches by the minister and Premier in various communities, and the acknowledgement of local interest group lobbying as captured in the documents all pointed to a public process that culminated in a decision that was broadly supported. Politicians and bureaucrats I interviewed took pride in detailing the universal endorsement of the initiative, highlighting the lack of partisan political bickering.

The public process surrounding the introduction of university colleges as captured by documents, Hansard, and press reports is depicted as one in which an informed public and supportive political opposition joins with the government

in the introduction of an universally acknowledged positive initiative. No political "arm-twisting" was required. No electoral concerns were raised or even contemplated. No ideological differences were identified. No regional squabbling was evident. It was a smooth, apolitical, consensual process.

With such a picture in mind let us turn to a recounting of the comments of politicians, bureaucrats, and college presidents on their view of the process leading to the university college decision. The next chapter will offer, in a thematic context, these comments as captured in confidential interviews.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS

Within the context of the public policy process it was speculated that a private more political process was unfolding. In order to explore the extent to which electoral politics played a part in the decision to establish university colleges and a fourth university interviews were held with politicians, bureaucrats, and college administrators. The three key questions asked were: What are the considerations of political leaders in deciding on policy initiatives? To what extent do senior officials consider the political imperatives of politicians in recommending policy initiatives and/or implementation strategies? What are the impacts, if any, on policy outcomes of the intrusion of electoral politics into the policy decision-making process?

The four themes: post-secondary education; politics; bureaucracy; and leadership emanating from the responses to the three questions provide the framework for presenting participant comments according to each of the three constituents: politicians; bureaucrats; and college presidents. The comments related have been chosen to explicate the particular theme. After each theme a

brief summary of key points in that section will be presented.

Post-Secondary Education

Politicians

The politicians interviewed had a fundamental understanding of what constituted post-secondary education. They were knowledgeable of the gross differences between universities and community colleges, but lacked some awareness of the more subtle and detailed differences, particularly in the areas of governance and scholarly activity. Not surprisingly, their primary focus was on the matter of access to post-secondary education.

All of the politicians also agreed that from the early days of the Vander Zalm administration "there was a general appreciation . . . that education had to be a priority." Yet each of those interviewed had a different idea as to what the specific education priority should have been. One suggested that the K-12 system was in need of more urgent attention than post-secondary education, while others argued the opposite or opted for both. The position adopted could be categorized on geographic lines. Among those interviewed, it was urban-based politicians who supported the K-12 priority, while rural politicians argued for post-secondary reform, with suburban members arguing for both.

The range of both knowledge and emotion towards the reform of post-secondary education undertaken by the Vander Zalm government was considerable. One politician had, in fact, continued and expanded a personal crusade for improvement in college and university offerings. Frustrated by the apparent unlikelihood of the "educators . . . ever recognizing that changes [to the post-secondary system] are needed," he advocated looking "to the private sector to do it." He strongly argued that the government had not gone far enough in its reforms and expressed a desire to "have one more chance."

This extreme but knowledgeable position was in stark contrast to another politician who indicated that his knowledge of the issues in reforming post-secondary education came primarily from discussions in caucus and briefing notes (invariably developed and written by ministry bureaucrats) prepared for cabinet. Although aware of the access issue as a result of media coverage and some minimal constituency pressure, he had been prepared in cabinet discussions of education issues "to defer to the minister in charge." He did allow that "looking back, these issues [university colleges and UNBC] . . . really deserved more input from all ministers."

Between these two extremes rests the most common position: a broad

awareness of the issues, based upon personal reflection on the information presented. These politicians had taken the time to read many of the reports and studies describing alternatives for changes to post-secondary education, at least in summary form. They were aware of the direction given by the Premier to the Minister of Advanced Education to review student financing and access. They kept abreast of discussions, media observations, and the responses of their constituents. The interviewees did acknowledge, however, that there were other factors bearing on their ultimate position.

First, these politicians credited the minister responsible for post-secondary education with ensuring they were informed and gently coached on those issues for which the minister wanted their support. As a result, when the issue of university colleges came to the cabinet table there was, in the description of one politician, "good discussion . . . but the decision was easy . . . because they [the ministers] knew it was a good program."

Secondly, as was evident from the outcome on the UNBC issue, more than pressure from the minister responsible and detailed briefings affected decisions. In the UNBC case the minister was opposed to the establishment of a fourth university and sought support of colleagues in defeating the initiative. The

discussion at cabinet, according to one participant "was heated and lengthy . . . coming to the table more than once." This was markedly different from the university colleges debate and was attributed by all the politicians to electoral concerns. Interestingly, the final decision to proceed with UNBC was just a whimper: all agreed with my observation that it was made when the Premier appointed Strachan, the MLA for Prince George and an advocate of UNBC, as Minister of Advanced Education in the Winter of 1990.

When asked specifically to express their current feelings about the two initiatives--university colleges and UNBC--the politicians gave further evidence of the range of knowledge, interest, and commitment. There was general continuing support for the university colleges with several politicians arguing for an expansion of this role. One described the colleges as "the backbone of the post-secondary system," another as "the best opportunity for market penetration and economical education." Others, however, were unable to indicate whether the initial university colleges had proved successful and claimed to lack the necessary knowledge to allow them to comment on expanding the system.

On the matter of the university in Prince George there was greater consensus. Each politician interviewed expressed concern about this initiative and

suggested it should not have been undertaken. There was greater awareness of the current status of the university development particularly as to its cost, a subject frequently highlighted in the media. One comment seemed to sum up the overall feeling about UNBC: "It should have been a university college."

Bureaucrats

The nature of the understanding of the issues in post-secondary education by the bureaucrats interviewed was clearly broader and more detailed. Each of them had been involved in the issues one way or another. Not surprisingly the extent of that involvement contributed to their awareness of specific concerns both at the time of the decisions and now.

Not unlike the politicians, each of the bureaucrats interviewed expressed support for the university college initiative. Those continuing to work for government in departments directly related to post-secondary education were the most aware of the current situation. They were also the most eager to attribute not only the continuing success of the initiative but also its origins to the workings of the bureaucracy. One of those interviewed suggested that even though the Provincial Access Committee had specifically identified university colleges as a partial solution to access problems, the "ministry staff had for years

been putting in budget issue papers suggestions that would have led to the same conclusion."

These current bureaucrats also had definite ideas as to how the university colleges should be defined and structured. They all agreed that the colleges "should not be institutions underway to becoming universities." They all agreed, however, that in some cases, the Okanagan to be specific, this would probably happen. They readily concurred with the notion that the university colleges should continue to be comprehensive institutions offering a broad range of programs. In fact they argued it was this comprehensiveness that was the key identifier of the uniqueness of the BC university college.

They had less definite opinions about the still contentious issues of university college governance, financing, and scholarly activity (research and tenure). It was not that they were unwilling or unable to express an opinion, but instead were generally uncertain as to appropriate solutions. Some advocated maintaining the current board governed system for colleges, while others argued that they needed to move closer to the university system, particularly by introducing a Senate. All seemed to agree that the cost to the government of a degree at a university college should be less than at a traditional university, but

could not agree on how much less. The most contentious issue, however, was the matter of scholarly activity--should university college instructors have tenure and should research (and the related support services, eg., reduced teaching loads and additional funds and staff) be a part of the university college mandate.

Those bureaucrats interviewed who were no longer in government but had been directly involved in the process leading to the university college decision were less concerned about the current state of affairs and more interested in the activities leading to the original decision. This is not to suggest that they had no opinion on the expansion or definition of university colleges but simply to identify that they felt their contribution to have been made several years earlier. One participant, a critical contributor to the original concept, said, in reference to the several outstanding university college policy issues, "It is not that I am uninterested in what is happening today . . . it's just that we provided direction [on these issues] . . . and it is frustrating when it has not been followed."

Those bureaucrats who had not been intimately involved in the details of the post-secondary question but were observers of the process categorized this debate as being similar to many others. While recognizing the "motherhood and apple pie nature" of this issue they saw no particular uniqueness to the process.

Presidents

The three presidents interviewed had very definite ideas about post-secondary education, both generally and as it applied to their particular institution. Each had an extensive background in the community college movement but their academic credentials differed, ranging from a technical/vocational base to research-based doctoral training. Their views reflected both their experience and their educational background.

All presidents, when asked to describe a university college, agreed that it was different from traditional universities. The extent of that difference, however, varied. One president described the university colleges as being "another graduate institution . . . not unlike the North American four year college . . . with an emphasis on degrees (although hopefully degrees different from traditional universities)." Another stated that these colleges were "a new kind of institution . . . that fill a void between community colleges and traditional universities." The third president referred to the "partnership between the university college and the community . . . requiring [the college] to respond to community needs--sometimes as a university, sometimes as a community college."

In addition to reflecting the unique background of each president, the foregoing descriptions of a university college also reflect the nature and desires of the local community. Not one of the participants disagreed with the stated need of university colleges to be responsive to the community. In fact, each argued that this single facet of the colleges most succinctly set them apart from the traditional universities. As one suggested, "The universities, particularly now in a time of cutbacks, could benefit from [a past practice] of more community involvement."

On particular issues such as governance and financing, once again there was a variety of positions reflective of the personal experience of each president.

On governance all bases were covered. One president argued for the maintenance of the current board-governed system for the university colleges. Acknowledging that faculty needed more input, he agreed this could be structured through formal advisory committees but that final decision-making needed to rest with the board. Another president strongly advocated a system much like the university model where the faculty, through a body like a senate or faculty council, could make binding academic decisions. The third president offered a compromise suggesting a system where structured faculty committees would be

given authority in specific areas by the board who would in turn delegate limited decision-making to such committees.

On the matter of government financing of university colleges, the position adopted by each president depended upon his particular vision of the college. Those inclined to emphasize the degree granting aspect of the college were strong advocates of funding close to the university level. In addition, they were not above suggesting that funds previously directed towards technical/vocational training might, in the future, be assigned to degree programming. The president committed to the maintenance of the comprehensive nature of the university college argued for increased funding for the non-degree programs and a "tight cap" on degree spending; he was concerned that without such an increase the comprehensive, community nature of the college would be threatened.

The most contentious issue, however, in each president's mind was the matter of so-called "scholarly activity." These seemingly innocent two words are the embodiment of a continuing debate between the degree granting and the non-degree granting factions within the college system.

Traditional universities have always maintained a high priority for

scholarly research. Significant funding, directly and indirectly, goes to support this activity. Hiring at the university reflects this research component and contributes to the requirement for high levels of academic credentials. As the college presidents interviewed pointed out, they believed that everyone associated with the university college concept since the access committees began work in 1988 wished to avoid a duplication of this traditional university pattern. However, they continue, the necessary college affiliation with such universities in the beginning days allowed, in fact demanded, the same high credentials for college degree instructors. With that came an expectation by those hired, many from existing universities, that the support services found in a traditional degree environment related to research would be available.

With no clear policy in place within the colleges and with the traditional universities overseeing the hiring, the seeds were sown for unhappiness and confrontation. As one president stated, "There is a continuing rift between university level faculty and the remainder of the . . . instructional group . . . although it is abating." At its heyday, this president explained, the rift included a demand for separate faculty lounges, something that was fortunately avoided. Likewise, the presidents suggested, non-degree faculty continue to fear a reduction in their numbers and resources as the degree programming increases.

The resolution to this problem of scholarly activity varied, not surprisingly, depending once again on one's particular vision of the future. A vision which involved the ultimate separation of the degree and non-degree programs into separate institutions led to a definition of scholarly activity similar to that of traditional universities for those teaching in that "hived-off" institution. The more accommodating vision of the programs existing harmoniously bred a more flexible interpretation of scholarly activity. This definition allowed for upgrading and "state-of-the-art" maintenance of one's discipline or trade to be equivalent to research activities. One president claimed that this was what was happening in his institution now.

One common thread did emerge from the interviews when this matter of scholarly activity was discussed. That was the recognition by all presidents that the primary activity of the university colleges should be teaching. Not only was this the historical reality of the community college but it was also the prevailing sentiment of the day. With the demands placed upon post-secondary education for more accountability for results, attention had turned to instructional quality and effectiveness. Several indicators of this were pointed to by the presidents, including: numerous studies on the role of universities and colleges, specifically the 1991 Commission of Inquiry on Canadian University Education headed by

Stuart Smith; governments pressing for greater return on the taxpayer dollar; and the increasing attacks on tenure within the universities. As one president stated, "We have a golden opportunity to lead the way in teaching excellence in contrast to the historically high demands for research and publication."

Given the concerns the presidents had about some aspects of traditional universities and the zeal they had for stressing teaching excellence, it is no surprise that they had little positive to say about the establishment of UNBC. None of them supported the building of a new traditional university in any location, but they were particularly offended at one being built in Prince George. Each clearly felt that the expansion of the existing community college in Prince George into a university college would have been a more appropriate way to proceed. And if for some reason this was not possible, then any university built to accommodate the uniqueness of the north needed surely to be quite different from a traditional university. One president was especially offended when he noticed that one of the early hirings for UNBC was a "ceremonies officer."

When asked to look ahead 25 years and describe the BC post-secondary system at that time, each president chose to reflect on the nature of his institution a quarter of a century from now. One said "I expect we [the community] will

have a regional university . . . in addition to a college . . . with the primary objective [being] teaching and learning for undergraduate students." Another envisioned "an increased emphasis [across the system], but particularly at my institution, on trades and technologies . . . with institutions [degree and non-degree] working very closely with industry." The third president anticipated his institution would "be even more community focused . . . with a expanded emphasis on access and personal growth."

The general consensus was that in 25 years there would be no additional traditional universities and in all likelihood, UNBC would have been either closed or dramatically reconfigured.

Summary

Most of the comments in this section are self-explanatory and of interest simply as stated. The confirmation of the political debate as to what should be the priority in educational reform and the frank admission by politicians that their specific knowledge of post-secondary issues was limited are important to understand the context of this study. Also significant was the consensus of the presidents in highlighting the opportunity for university colleges to stress teaching and innovation as opposed to more traditional research functions. This sentiment

was reflected in the disappointment expressed particularly, but not exclusively, by presidents towards the conventional nature of the university in Prince George.

Politics

There are two significant arenas in which electoral politics are potentially discussed: cabinet and caucus. The former is composed of MLAs appointed to a portfolio by the Premier who as chair controls the agenda. At any given time there will be a wide range of ministerial experience at the cabinet table. Frequently there will be outright rookies participating in cabinet discussions who only the day before were simply members of caucus, a group of MLAs organized by party affiliation. Each elected party has a caucus. Normally this body meets daily during legislative sessions. It is chaired by a Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) who is elected by his/her peers and who, with input, establishes the meeting agenda.

Politicians

Considerable comment was offered by each politician as to the impact of electoral politics on decision-making. Not surprisingly the opinions varied from person to person. In each case, however, those interviewed attributed any electoral concerns to others as opposed to themselves. Frequently this attribution

was to groups rather than individuals. One politician went on at considerable length about the continual concern expressed by the caucus about electoral implications. This person argued that, as the MLAs were more concerned about politics than the cabinet, a cabinet minister needed to be better prepared for antagonistic debate and argument at a caucus meeting than at a cabinet meeting.

One of the interviewees described in some detail an argument with other caucus members about the entire matter of access to post-secondary programs and specifically, increasing the number of degree granting institutions. The argument was not about the particular location of the proposed university colleges, but more about treating the entire issue as an election issue. Some caucus members apparently wished to delay any decision on this matter until closer to an election, arguing "this is a good issue [we can] translate into votes." The interviewee indicated possible agreement with this approach if the election were closer; however, since it was early in the mandate the decision should be to proceed with university colleges immediately. This politician stated, "I don't think it's fair to the public to hold off on instituting policy that is good policy on the basis of waiting for an election."

Another interviewee provided a different slant on the pre-eminence of

electoral concern to party caucuses in a discussion of the impact of ideology on decision-making. Arguing that the elected representatives of "a left-wing party like the New Democrats are idealized" (i.e., utopian, starry-eyed and often, as a result, impractical) and that "they are driven almost exclusively by the marriage of their ideology with their election chances," this politician suggested that NDP decisions and caucus input to those decisions were "more driven by electoral concerns than a right-wing party might be."

Another interviewee provided some insight into the perspective of caucus members to the decision-making process. Their opinions were often overwhelmed, this interviewee suggested, by the bureaucratic input directly to the cabinet minister, and hence to cabinet, resulting in political considerations being "shuffled to the rear." In this person's view the concern was frequently expressed by caucus members that their opinion would be ignored by cabinet and it was only in caucus that the politics of an issue were fully considered. He stated, "issues often became political to caucus MLAs but seldom . . . for the cabinet."

However, matters of electoral concern were not solely the concern of caucus. Sometimes the interviewees would point the finger at individual cabinet

colleagues. The argument was that frequently ministers were poorly briefed on the details of a particular proposal and as a result they resorted to raising issues of electoral concerns to participate in the debate. It was suggested that "this was particularly true of less experienced cabinet ministers." However, this interviewee went on to point out that in the Vander Zalm cabinet this was not generally a good line of attack, since the Premier was not, at least initially, concerned much about electoral implications.

As might be expected, all of the politicians interviewed expressed confidence in their own re-election chances. It was this confidence, they claimed, that allowed them to develop and implement policies with little concern for electoral implications. However, this orientation was limited to the early days of the Vander Zalm administration. Each admitted that as the going got tougher, electability was no longer as sure a thing as originally thought. Nevertheless, such negative thoughts were kept private, with each of them continuing to make decisions that were in the best interests of "all British Columbians." Although not specifically defined, it seemed as though each politician viewed "best interests" as something that was beyond the understanding of most of their constituency.

Not even the widely predicted defeat of the government could dampen their electoral confidence. In the dying days of their administration, an informal survey of the entire cabinet questioning their re-electability did not produce a single member willing to admit to possible electoral loss. In the words of one interviewee, "I have never met a politician that entered an election convinced he was going to lose . . . and so even towards the end each cabinet member believed their own personal popularity was such . . . that they couldn't lose." This, the interviewee suggested, proved that "most politicians' judgement in terms of political matters isn't all that effective and good."

Although confident of their own electoral position and proud to present themselves as non-political in addressing the issues, the participants offered a number of comments regarding special interest groups. They acknowledged the existence of such groups, yet varied in their assessment of their influence. A clear distinction was made between the pressure of well-organized, well-funded formal lobbying groups and so-called "grass-roots" movements. Each politician agreed that the latter groups would receive more attention than the others. Yet only one participant indicated a willingness to change direction in response to "people" pressure, organized or not. It seems that this politician is inclined towards a definition of the politician's role as an "agent of the people" (i.e.,

elected to carry out the wishes of the people) as opposed to the other interviewees' perception of themselves as "the people's representatives" (i.e., mandated to carry out their duties according to their best individual judgement) (Boyle, 1986 p. 2).

Interestingly, one interviewee did admit that a "snowball effect" could be created when both the bureaucracy and the people were pleading for the same outcome. In such an instance the lobbying could be either formal or informal, organized or spontaneous. Furthermore, this seemed to be particularly true when the issue under consideration was receiving bi-partisan support, as was the case with the university colleges initiative. As one participant stated, "I'd like to think that the merits of doing so [establishing university colleges] were the main reasons that we did pursue it, but it seemed that everyone--ministry staff, educators, the opposition, and the public--were in agreement. That didn't hurt."

Another thing that all the politicians interviewed could agree on was the "nature of the political animal to take credit" for any activity that was generating positive response. This was true of any issue whether or not it had originated with the politician, the bureaucracy, or the public. One participant pointed out that when an issue was long-lived inevitably the politician would assume the lead

in the decision-making process even after having opposed the issue in the early stages. The posture adopted in this leadership role varied, however, depending upon the circumstances. It was even suggested that information was controlled and massaged to accommodate the particular audience being addressed. Frequently the "pitches" made to caucus and to the public were quite different, with the former calling for an image of leadership from "behind," the latter for an image of leadership from "in front."

Without exception all of the politicians interviewed agreed that there was little evidence of electoral politics at play in the decision to proceed with the implementation of university colleges. Over and over each of them attested to the universal support for this initiative and the broad consensus that this was a good public policy decision. As a result, they all suggested that electoral political consideration was not required.

On the other hand the exact opposite was true, in their mind, of the decision to build a new university at Prince George. Each eagerly described this decision as being solely based on political factors related to obtaining votes. The Minister of State, Bruce Strachan, who had provided funds for the society advocating a full university in Prince George had become Minister of Advanced

Education at the very time a decision on the approach to northern access had to be made (Winter, 1990). To a person the politicians argued this was a clear indication by the Premier that a university would be approved for Prince George. Yet it was evident from their comments that they could find very little difference between the actual activities and representations made in support of either initiative, particularly by the various publics involved.

Bureaucrats

The bureaucracy functions to advise ministers and to administer departments. They advance policy recommendations and implement ultimate policy decisions. Only senior bureaucrats (deputy and assistant deputy ministers) are directly affected by election outcomes, often being replaced by the new government, with most of the public service maintaining a politically neutral role.

Although hesitant at first to discuss electoral political influences, as the interviews progressed each of the bureaucrats offered insights into the political impact on policy decisions. Because they said they felt more comfortable not addressing personalities, often their comments were more generic in nature. However, some participants--particularly those who no longer had any direct affiliation with government--spoke freely about the political influence on both the

university college and the Prince George university initiatives.

Each of the bureaucrats still active within the BC public service appropriated credit for initiation of the university college program to the minister. Even if they acknowledged that ministry staff had collected, and in some cases prepared, background papers on such an alternative they were careful to acknowledge the minister's leadership in advancing the proposal.

Others were not so effusive in their praise but nonetheless argued for the pivotal role of the minister in advancing the policy. This was particularly critical in the interaction with cabinet. Each of the bureaucrats interviewed had, on occasion, gone before cabinet to provide information to assist cabinet in its decision-making. Yet each bureaucrat acknowledged the importance of the minister's position in arguing for a particular policy. This importance was highlighted by the recognition that most cabinet decisions were made in closed session and often, the bureaucrats suspected, after considerable political discussion. This latter point was made with the immediate qualification that the bureaucrats were not accusing cabinet of making electorally motivated decisions only that they, the bureaucrats, assumed that such discussions would have occurred given the nature of the "political animal." No one suggested that this

was in any way inappropriate.

The influence of local politicians and targeted interest groups on both themselves and the politicians was acknowledged by each bureaucrat. Obviously, those who had been directly involved in the regional access committees that had been established to examine post-secondary access were more keenly aware of the pressure of local activists. After all, they had been part of a process that requested representation from any interested parties. But even those who were more removed from the direct lobbying process, those bureaucrats confined to Victoria, admitted to being pressured by highly vocal regional politicians and interest groups. Furthermore, they indicated that often such lobbying affected decision-making at all levels, politically and bureaucratically.

One of the most frequent influencing techniques of lobbying groups and/or individuals was to play to the lack of specific expertise of the minister. Recognizing that the latter's knowledge of a particular issue was often limited, lobbyists provided another source of expert information. The bureaucrats interviewed expressed concern about this tactic, since frequently the information provided was incomplete and not entirely accurate. Furthermore, they argued, interest groups were likely to cast their recommendations in a political light and

they supposed such electoral concerns could have some influence on ministerial decision-making.

The bureaucrats, like the politicians interviewed, agreed that the size and nature of the lobbying groups affected their success. If they were a large, "grass-roots" group their influence tended to be greater. Furthermore, it was also agreed that the influence of such groups was greatly enhanced if there was congruence between the position of the group and that of the senior bureaucracy.

A concern expressed by two of the bureaucrats focused on the lack of interaction between senior public servants and party caucuses. Without indicating any knowledge of the political nature of caucus discussion, these bureaucrats suggested that it was problematic that they were unable to discuss policy initiatives directly with caucus. This was particularly true of the government caucus. One interviewee indicated that, in fact, what limited access they had to party caucuses was primarily with opposition members.

Local regional politicians frequently presented a challenge to senior bureaucrats, several interviewees suggested. This was particularly true if the local office-holder was of the same political persuasion or philosophy as the

provincial government. Most often these local politicians had no wish to discuss their concerns or demands with the bureaucracy, but dealt directly with the minister or MLA. Unfortunately, in the experience of some bureaucrats, this led to decisions being taken that were limited and inadequate because of a narrow regional focus.

In the cases of the establishment of university colleges and the University of Northern British Columbia, the perceptions of the bureaucrats were very similar to those of the politicians. They indicated that the university college initiative was not electorally motivated and was simply good public policy with which they agreed. On the other hand, the northern university decision was, in their mind, based solely upon electoral concerns and was not only contrary to bureaucratic recommendations but was clearly poor public policy.

Presidents

The willingness to discuss the politics of the decision to establish university colleges varied among the college presidents interviewed. The presidents argued that the university college decision was not politically motivated but was the result of considered "research and debate." Even when acknowledging the role of community lobby groups and the efforts of local

politicians, one president remarked that this was not "connected to any political movement because there were people involved from the broad spectrum of political philosophies."

All presidents were quick to point out that where there was local lobbying, the college provided logistical and pedagogical support as appropriate. They agreed that such support was in their own interest, since they recognized that the influence of such groups was significant. Likewise the colleges formed their own lobby groups, interacting with both the politicians and the bureaucrats. In one case a president acknowledged that his personal acquaintance with the minister gave him access that would have possibly been denied to others. However, this same president was quick to assure me that such access did not constitute political influence. Yet he did suggest that "developing a good rapport with the minister was useful . . . particularly [when the minister] trusted that you would not put him in a bind like the bureaucrats might." The other presidents recognized the potential benefits of such a close relationship with the minister and even suggested that in this case, this might have affected the inclusion of this president's college in the initiative.

Interestingly, this latter comment was quickly qualified as not being a

political statement. The "rapport" suggested was not based upon political sympathy but upon "common-sense and expertise." When pushed, however, it was acknowledged that not being of a contrary political philosophy aided in establishing a relationship with the minister. This president was careful to point out that such "sympathy" needed to be conveyed covertly since any overt partisan political display could be detrimental to the college.

The presidents claimed little or no knowledge of the political workings of cabinet and caucus, except to suspect that it was in such forums that electoral concerns would be raised. None of the presidents had met with either body nor did they think that such a meeting was required or according to two of them, appropriate.

This "hands-off" attitude to a discussion of political influence on the decision to proceed with university colleges was not so evident when the discussion turned to the establishment of a university in Prince George. In this case each of the presidents indicated that there seemed to be evidence of electoral motivation in the UNBC decision. Each pointed to the manipulation of local lobby groups by the MLA who ensured that the importance of this institution to political victory was clearly evident. One president pointed to the "blatant

involvement of [political] supporters of the local MLA on various committees and boards lobbying for the university."

Furthermore, the presidents suggested that the local college president in Prince George was "more political . . . and got more directly involved." Unlike their own participation, which they viewed as advisory and supportive, they characterized the Prince George president as a "political activist." After all it was he who had aggressively opposed the establishment of a university college in Prince George. Although avoiding outright accusations, one president even suggested that there was misrepresentation as to the nature of the "northern" university to politicians and citizens alike in order to maintain the political momentum that had been established amongst an array of regional lobbying groups.

The foregoing notwithstanding, the presidents when challenged did acknowledge that the structural process of lobbying government--both politicians and bureaucrats--was much the same for both the university college and the UNBC initiatives. Yet they were approving of the one and not of the other, just as they agreed with the one decision and not with the other.

Summary

Of the many issues raised by the comments in this section three would seem key. First was the clear indication by the politicians interviewed that electoral consideration, particularly as it applied to election in the relatively distant future, was not a primary motivation for decision-making in this instance. Secondly, there was clear evidence of role definition in several of the comments made by both politicians and bureaucrats. The latter group were deliberate in deferring final decision-making authority to the minister while at the same time defending their own expertise and integrity. Finally, all three constituents groups differentiated between the political nature of the university college and the UNBC decisions, declaring the former to be non-political, the latter completely political.

Bureaucracy

Politicians

Each of the politicians interviewed had definite opinions on the nature and significance of bureaucratic influence and the relationship between a minister and the senior bureaucracy. Since they had each worked with senior public servants, their perspectives reflected individual personal experience. There was unanimous agreement on the need for trust and respect between the minister and the deputy minister. As one politician suggested, "without [trust and respect] you should

probably be looking around for a new deputy." Not one politician, however, suggested that the converse was true: a deputy who could not trust a minister should be looking for a new one.

There was little disagreement amongst the politicians that the detailed administration of the ministries was the purview of the senior bureaucrats. However each of them suggested that in some areas the minister needed to be involved directly in day-to-day administration in order to ensure appropriate policy implementation. This was particularly true, one politician indicated, in areas that reflected "a new concept . . . such as regionalization or privatization."

Given that the bureaucracy was the single largest source of expert information and advice, each politician acknowledged the significant influence senior bureaucrats had on policy development and implementation. In each case however, concern was expressed about the information that ministers received from the public service. One politician suggested that a major concern was whether "I got all the information . . . because it made all the difference in how I handled the issue later." Another referred to the representations of the bureaucracy as "biased advice." Yet another politician accused the bureaucracy of most often tending to be "negative" and "unenthusiastic" in their advice.

This latter comment reflected a general agreement amongst the politicians that the bureaucracy, although filled to over-flowing with expertise, was not often innovative or inclined towards risk-taking. One politician went on at some length about the Ministry of Education bureaucracy "lacking imagination in terms of seizing opportunities." Furthermore, it was suggested that since a great number of bureaucrats in that ministry are "supported by the very institutions they are administering . . . you can't get a breath of fresh air through that ministry no matter how many windows you open." This was a direct reference to the overwhelming number of personnel from the elementary and secondary systems serving in key ministry positions.

This same impression was expressed by another interviewee who indicated that the education ministry bureaucracy was "in a mode of not looking at any new ideas." As a result this politician argued in support of an outside committee to offer new perspectives on the issue of university colleges since the ministry had become "almost a bystander." This politician further contended that it was only in the face of apparent progress towards a decision to implement university colleges that the bureaucracy started supporting the initiative with more than routine technical advice.

Although this concern about the ability of the bureaucracy to stimulate new ideas varied in intensity from politician to politician, there was general agreement that for a number of reasons the politician had to maintain control of the policy agenda. One particular reason these politicians argued was because their time "in control" was relatively short compared to the bureaucracy. As one politician suggested, "You always had to be on your toes because you had worked a short time on your agenda, where these people [the bureaucracy] had been working on [their] agenda for five, six, seven years." Another politician repeated concern about the lack of imagination in that agenda.

Earlier when commenting on political influences on decision-making, the politicians suggested that they always took credit for policy decisions that seemed to be successful. It is not surprising therefore that these same politicians would argue that the policy leadership came from themselves and that it was they who stimulated new policy ideas. When challenged however, each of those interviewed acknowledged the tremendous influence of the bureaucracy on the crafting and establishing the priority of policy initiatives. One politician suggested that notwithstanding the credit taken by ministers and their effort to control the agenda, "the underpinning of the whole exercise . . . was driven by the documentation done by staff and their presentation style on the issue."

Another suggested that even if the politicians believed they were ahead on the issue, they "turned to the bureaucracy for the necessary information to proceed." Technical expertise was significant after all!

The overall perception of the political/bureaucratic relationship captured in the comments of these politicians ranged from one of a "partnership" with each party having distinct roles and responsibilities to one of a "control environment" with one party dominating the other. In this latter case two of the politicians agreed that the dominant group was the bureaucracy. As one of them stated, "Since the political leadership relies on the same old bureaucrats to get things done . . . those same bureaucrats will just out-wait the political term of office [if they disagree with the change]."

There was no indication from any of the politicians that there was any collaboration, public or private, between themselves and the bureaucracy to ensure political survival. Each agreed that however sympathetic senior bureaucrats might be to the philosophy of the government as public servants they were determined to avoid actions that could be considered partisan-political. The politicians did suggest, however, that an indication from deputy ministers that they were philosophically unsympathetic to the ministers' political ideology would

seriously impair the establishment of trust between the minister and the bureaucracy. Given such a situation all politicians agreed that the deputy minister should be changed, but all also agreed that, barring a change in government, this was difficult to do.

In terms of the specific university colleges and UNBC initiatives all the politicians interviewed agreed that the bureaucracy, regardless of the aforementioned concerns, operated structurally in the same manner for both. This, even though senior bureaucrats agreed with the university college proposal and not with the UNBC proposal and in both cases were responding to proposals originating beyond the ministry.

Bureaucrats

The bureaucrats interviewed fell neatly into two categories--those who were still performing senior functions within government and those who were not. This latter group had retired, resigned or moved to a less senior public service position. From each category of bureaucrat quite different comments about the operation of the bureaucracy and its relationship to the politicians were received.

Senior bureaucrats within government were careful to give due credit to

ministers and to cast their role as one of advice and counsel without partisan political overtones. They described a bureaucracy which was in place to serve the public and to do so in accordance with the wishes of the elected officials. It was suggested however, that the greater allegiance of the bureaucracy was to the people and therefore any attempt to involve the public service in direct electoral manipulation was to in fact corrupt the system. As one interviewee stated, "At decision time you take a bit of a neutral stance in a sense, having provided information, and when the decision is taken you work to implement it." This "neutrality" was an important point for these current bureaucrats to make. Such was not the case with those bureaucrats no longer in senior positions.

This group offered a somewhat different perspective on the role of the senior bureaucracy. Although recognizing the prevailing theoretical opinion that the public service was not to be partisan in its interaction with the politician, several interviewees stated that in practice advice offered was frequently cast in partisan political terms. One suggested that often recommendations to the minister would include the contemplated reaction from the opposition and others opposed to the government. Furthermore, the presentation of alternatives would be organized in such a way as to reinforce the minister's political philosophy. They did point out that the extent to which this occurred, however, was

determined more by the minister than the bureaucrat.

Each interviewee who had served as a deputy minister agreed that the style of interaction between bureaucrat and politician was as a result of the expectations and demands of the minister. Each interviewee was quick to compare ministers and offer anecdotal evidence of the range of behaviours required, dependent on the particular minister involved. As one suggested, "Each minister sets the culture within which you operate. As a result, I relate differently to [each one]."

Those who were no longer formally in government service but still had occasion to interact with politicians were more inclined to acknowledge the electoral aspect of decision-making. Two of the interviewees, who had done subsequent consulting work directly for ministers, indicated that it was the political motivation of the minister which allowed things to get done. Without it, they argued, the bureaucracy would have "dragged its feet" and nothing would have happened. This observation was in direct contrast to the opinion of those who were still in senior positions. These bureaucrats argued that the bureaucracy was frequently pro-active in its efforts to support the initiatives of the politicians and that prodding from the minister was not generally required. Quite the contrary, argued the retired group, claiming it was this "prodding" that came

from the requirements of the politicians that was frequently essential to getting policy established and implemented.

All of the bureaucrats agreed that the quality of decisions was, more often than not, directly related to the quality of advice and information received. Those still in government argued that the bureaucracy was quite effective in providing such quality information. Without challenging the prerogative of the minister, some of these bureaucrats questioned the wisdom of establishing outside committees to prepare recommendations on various issues. They were not opposed to public consultation but argued that ministry coordination of such input was appropriate. One interviewee offered the Sullivan Royal Commission as a good example of bureaucratic coordination. This commission headed by the late Barry Sullivan, Q.C., conducted an extensive study of the British Columbia school system between March, 1987 and July, 1988. The education bureaucracy played a key role in the commission's work providing critical organization and support services.

On the other hand, those who had left government argued that the quality of information generally improved when outside groups were engaged to examine and report on issues. Coordination by the bureaucracy, they suggested, would

only serve to interfere with the substance and "purity" of the information provided. They did recognize however, that the best chance of success in determining a particular policy was to have cooperation between outside groups and the bureaucracy. These former bureaucrats argued that if a policy recommendation was sanctioned by both external advisors and the ministry bureaucracy, there was a greater chance of it gaining the support of the minister.

Not unlike the politicians interviewed, each of the bureaucrats who had worked with ministers agreed that trust and respect were essential ingredients to a successful relationship. The range of this trust however, was considerable. Some argued for trust on a personal level, with minister and bureaucrat alike simply acknowledging the integrity of each other and assuming that neither would act in a manner so as to embarrass or harm the other. Some suggested trust went even farther. These interviewees expected that each party could be trusted to operate solely within their agreed areas of responsibility. As one former deputy minister expressed it, "[The minister's] role is to provide policy direction, mine is to make it work. [Ministers], therefore, should not be involved in the day-to-day operation of the ministry." Not unlike the politicians the bureaucrats viewed trust as a one-way effort with little recognition of its reciprocal nature.

In the matter of the university college and UNBC initiatives these bureaucrats saw their role as one of advice and counsel. Although hesitant to indicate disagreement with the different outcomes of their advice in these two instances, they expressed continuing disappointment in the decision to proceed with the northern university in Prince George. In contrast, their enthusiasm for the university colleges was evident in many of their comments. One senior bureaucrat, in discussing the current reaction of Ministry of Education staff to the two initiatives, stated, "Their support for the [colleges] is genuine pleasure . . . to UNBC I think they are much more cynical."

One final note: Several of the bureaucrats interviewed, both from within and without government, spoke of the positive impact on the bureaucracy of the approach adopted by the Vander Zalm administration towards government decision-making. The effort to involve senior bureaucrats in discussing and deciding cross-government issues was commended by a number of participants. Typical of the comments was, "There was a much healthier sense of the big picture as a result of the regular meetings of deputies . . . It also resulted in better decisions."

Presidents

In all of the interviews the fewest comments made about any subject were the comments made by the college presidents about the bureaucracy. The reasons for this, and there are several, will be examined in the discussion chapter that follows. What was said, however, showed a generally positive relationship between the bureaucracy and the colleges.

There was an interesting dichotomy in the responses of the presidents. Each acknowledged that much of the interaction between the colleges and ministry staff was at the middle/junior management level. One president suggested that staff at the ministry director level were key to obtaining support of the bureaucracy. This president argued that "the directors [in the Ministry] are very important, they can go to bat for you . . . as long as you keep them informed . . . they can help out."

Likewise, each president reflected on the influence of the deputy minister towards college programs and resources. The deputy was also a key player in the colleges' efforts to obtain resources. There was considerable praise for the deputy of the time with suggestions that his "extensive bureaucratic experience" and his "willingness to listen and take advice" made communication with the

ministry easy and effective. Also acknowledged was the deputy's influence on the minister and the need, as a result, to ensure that the deputy was aware of each college's unique requirements.

The dichotomy, mentioned above, arises in the apparent inability of the presidents, when asked, to identify the most important relationship between the ministry and the colleges. Without an effective deputy, they argued, interaction would be difficult. Yet they also agreed that most of the interaction came between more junior ministry staff and college personnel and that at this level there was frequently little direct input by the deputy or the president. All three did admit, however, that broad brush support at the most senior levels both within the ministry and the colleges was essential to enable more junior staff to carry out their endeavors.

One common sentiment expressed by all presidents, regardless of what level of the bureaucracy they were describing, was that all bureaucrats tended to "be more cautious . . . than either the colleges and often the minister."

This caution, the presidents suggested, was evident in their approach to both the university college and the UNBC initiatives. Although it was clear to

each president that the deputy and other ministry staff were opposed to the northern university, it received the same structural support as did the university colleges, an initiative they did favour. Whatever comments were made privately by ministry staff, and there were according to one president many such comments, publicly the ministry professed support for UNBC. The presidents both admired and marvelled at this display of "professionalism."

Summary

Two key issues arise out of these many comments on the bureaucracy. First and foremost is the unanimous agreement as to the nature of the political/bureaucratic relationship. Not one participant suggested that any collusion existed between these two groups and, in fact, all were unanimous in identifying trust and respect as the essential ingredients in a successful relationship between senior bureaucrats and ministers. However the notion of trust as part of a marriage of the two roles was not detailed. The suggestion was more of an accommodation than a two-way trust relationship. As a sub-section of the relationship issue, the entire question of power was raised, necessitating some comment in the next chapter. The second key issue was the general acceptance by all participants of the "cautious" nature of the bureaucracy in both policy development and implementation and its consistent maintenance of

structural equality in its approach to all initiatives.

Leadership

Politicians

The comments regarding leadership by the politicians, each of whom had been a cabinet minister, could be placed into two categories: descriptions of leadership either inside or outside of cabinet. Inside cabinet comments, although mentioning colleagues, tended to focus on the role of the Premier. Outside cabinet comments, on the other hand, touched on a whole range of experiences: caucus; constituents; lobby groups; bureaucracy; and the electorate.

Caucus, as discussed earlier, provided interesting challenges to each cabinet minister. Each politician commented that both individual MLAs and caucus as a group were constantly struggling with their lack of power over decisions made by the government. One interviewee described the prevailing mood of the caucus as being a "continuing suspicion that information was being deliberately withheld [by cabinet ministers]." As a result caucus members tended to exercise their frustration in caucus meetings, placing the proposals of cabinet ministers under close scrutiny. This most frequently took the form of politically motivated questioning. In fact, each politician interviewed noted that the majority

of electoral concerns surrounding a proposed policy initiative would be raised by caucus. To quote one politician, "A recurring demand of caucus was: Let's talk politics!"

The politicized nature and constant frustration of the caucus required a particular approach by ministers in presenting new initiatives to it. One interviewee suggested that it was not so much a question of leadership in dealing with the caucus but more like "a selling job." He also openly admitted that if you had debated the initiative successfully at cabinet, the presentation to caucus was more of a courtesy and as such was "couched in terms of gaining quick support." This frequently meant that full information was deliberately not presented. In describing "tactics" for dealing with caucus, another politician outlined a strategy for handling the member of caucus who was "the champion for a specific issue." In this case lobbying was done with this member prior to any meeting to bring him/her "onside" or at least "mitigate his/her opposition."

When responding to constituents many of the same tactics used in dealing with caucus were employed. Local constituents were often passionately committed to obtaining a particular outcome. Their expectation for their elected representative was the delivery of a favourable decision. As each politician

acknowledged, the wishes of constituents were of importance to them. However not one politician indicated that a sharing of detailed information on initiatives was the way to proceed with the local electorate. On the contrary, they argued for providing limited facts and presenting "palatable overviews."

In these situations it was imperative, according to one interviewee, that the minister "appear to be in charge and in possession of information beyond their [the constituents'] comprehension." Frequently this was accomplished, as it was with caucus, by claiming confidentiality.

Lobby groups were a continuing source of frustration to cabinet ministers. Each one interviewed agreed that you needed to listen to such groups, but frequently there were equally passionate arguments presented for both sides of an issue. Therefore it required considerable tact and diplomacy to assure each group that its opinion was valuable and would be considered.

An interesting dichotomy arose in the discussion of responding to interest groups. On the one hand the politicians argued that they were interested in the scope of a group's representation, that is, province-wide or merely local, and that the breadth of support affected their influence. On the other hand they agreed

that a relatively small local group from their own constituency would receive significantly more attention. This in spite of a declaration by all the politicians that an important element of their leadership image was to "do what was right . . . regardless of interest group pressure."

The participants have already discussed the relationship between the politicians and the bureaucracy. The latter's influence on policy decisions has been acknowledged and was confirmed in this discussion of leadership. Each politician agreed that since the primary source for information was the bureaucracy, this gave it a significant role in shaping and implementing policy. However it was in describing their role as leader vis-a-vis the bureaucracy that the politicians were most aggressive in indicating the power of their position. The references to "leading" the bureaucracy varied but included: "that's the way we're going, you [the deputy minister] get it done"; "the staff documented it . . . but I led it"; and "it was us [the politicians] who were ahead on the issues . . . they [the bureaucracy] had to catch-up." The contrast between these comments and the earlier reflections on who really influenced decision-making is significant and will be discussed later.

To present themselves to the electorate at large each politician suggested

that a key strategy was to cultivate a good rapport with the media. Every effort was made to increase one's exposure in the press, particularly in a context where one's leadership role would be enhanced. This was done in several ways, but the approach most commonly identified by this group of politicians was the "reflected glory" technique, a technique that was applied most successfully during the university college process.

Throughout the months leading up to the decision to establish the three university colleges the politicians, whether directly or indirectly involved, tried to maximize their exposure in the company of senior college and university officials. Sometimes this would be reflected in photo opportunities, but was more likely captured in pointed references in reports and press releases referring to consultations and meetings with such officials.

One minister talked of a meeting with senior university personnel in which a vice-president was "taking a very negative stance" towards colleges granting degrees. The minister, after listening for a few minutes, pointedly rebuked this official by saying "if you don't want to participate, you may find there is a price to pay for that." The minister, in addition to apparently bringing the university vice-president on side, enhanced his leadership role by ensuring the essence of the

exchange was shared with the media. Such manipulations were acknowledged by all the politicians to be not only essential but commonplace.

Descriptions of leadership within cabinet by these politicians were of a different cast than the foregoing. Although recognizing that individual ministers frequently possessed significantly more information than their colleagues and as a result were often deferred to, there was no doubt that the defining power and influence rested with the Premier.

Each politician referred to the "impressive" nature of the Premier's power. As one stated, "Unlike the President [of the United States] . . . a [Canadian] Prime Minister or Premier has extreme powers. They say they're going to do something and it happens." This minister further described the Premier's power as "a bit scary" and calling for a "very mature use of [it] . . . not taking advantage of it."

This power of the Premier was apparently not limited to pronouncements or executive-style decisions. In some cases it was as subtle as "watching for body language signals" and adjusting one's argument accordingly. At other times it was a matter of anticipating the Premier's response by "allowing your colleagues

to speak first . . . and watching his response." In many cases it was a question of determining in advance the premier's disposition to the particular issue (frequently by simply paying attention to his publicly reported statements to the media) and "being smart enough to pull it from the [cabinet] agenda" if he were not supportive. All agreed that there was limited cabinet authority, individually and collectively, on any matter without the concurrence of the Premier. As one suggested "the effectiveness of any minister is almost totally dependent on the amount of support he gets from the Premier".

Whatever the form of the Premier's power there was no question in the minds of the politicians interviewed that his power was pervasive. They argued that some ministers could influence him more than others and that senior staff had some effect on his positions but in the final analysis, since both ministers and senior staff held their position at his pleasure, he had the final say. One interviewee used a familiar cliché to sum it up: "He who pays the piper calls the tune."

Bureaucrats

The bureaucrats interviewed were quick to point out that their leadership role was far more constrained than that of the politicians. First, they were

expected to defer to the politicians and ascribe any leadership to them. Secondly, they needed to differentiate between the advocacy and counsel role in dealing with ministers and the management role required in administering their ministries. Finally, success in accomplishing the previous two activities necessitated a low public profile and as a result demanded no posturing for leadership recognition.

Nevertheless, constrained or not, the demands on senior bureaucrats to influence and control government initiatives were considerable. As one deputy minister suggested it was often a "delicate balancing act" between the wishes of the minister, the expertise of the ministry, and the perceived best interests of the public. Considerable communication and interpersonal skills were required to achieve a positive outcome. One senior bureaucrat described his role as frequently that of a "buffer" between the expectations of the public, the knowledge of the staff, and the political agenda of the politician. It was not always easy, each agreed.

In fact several bureaucrats talked about the difficulty of determining how much they should compromise their own principles in order to maintain the "delicate balance." One suggested that "there are a few decisions which are 'life and death' decisions . . . which require a 'walk in the snow' [a reference to the

Trudeau resignation decision]." Generally however, this bureaucrat continued, "if you believe in the democratic process, you recognize the ultimate authority of those elected to make the decision . . . you simply offer the best advice you can." This deference to the "democratic system" allowed, each bureaucrat suggested, an acceptable escape from continually feeling compromised and defeated.

Those bureaucrats who were no longer in government but who did function as consultants to ministers had a far more political view of their influence. Along with providing expert advice based upon research and investigation these bureaucrats felt an obligation to provide partisan political advice to the minister. Such advice was not included in any formal report but was most often offered in a more informal way, "frequently over dinner or drinks." Having been chosen by the minister, these bureaucrats assumed that the minister wanted them to bring forward such partisan opinions. Some even suggested that getting such advice from them allowed the minister to deal less politically with the senior government bureaucracy.

Those who held senior positions in a ministry but reported to a deputy minister held significantly different views of their role. They had no expectation that they were to provide leadership in any high profile way. This was clearly

the purview of the minister and on some rare occasions the deputy minister. Their leadership was required in dealing with the specific external groups and institutions that took direction or advice from the ministry. They relied on their expertise to affect outcomes and to generate the necessary respect of outside groups to influence policy direction and institutional implementation.

Each of these groups of bureaucrats influenced the development and implementation of the university college and UNBC initiatives. Those who worked in government reporting directly to ministers affected outcomes by the counsel they offered and their control of the process. The deputy ministers were clearly the "gatekeepers" between the colleges and the politicians. Those bureaucrats offering political advice in addition to their consultant role affirmed the political advantage to proceeding with university colleges. The third group, those more junior ministry staff, served to monitor the details of the initiative ensuring proposed regulations and procedures were realistic.

The same functions were undertaken by these groups in the period prior to the decision to establish a university in Prince George. The difference was, that in all cases, the aforementioned bureaucrats were working to convince the politicians to pursue a different route. However when the decision was made to

proceed with UNBC the activities of each group were the same for each project albeit with different levels of enthusiasm.

Presidents

There was little disagreement among the presidents as to the leadership roles of the politicians and bureaucrats in the development and implementation of policy. In fact their observations closely paralleled those of the bureaucrats interviewed: politicians as perceived leaders, influenced by both the political and strategic advice offered by consultants; the deputy ministers acting as a bridge between the presidents and the ministers, providing information and counsel; and ministry staff working with college personnel to keep the details of the initiative on track.

What the presidents touched on that the other participants did not was the influence of the philosophy and style of each president in determining both the short and long term character of their institution. Each indicated that their vision for the colleges was based not only on the nature of their communities but to a larger extent on their own biases. As suggested earlier those with a more academic background tended not only to decide issues from that perspective but also hired senior administrators who would complement their approach, frequently

from outside the institution. Presidents with a more technical/vocational orientation tended to promote from within the college.

One president suggested further that there was a significant difference between the college administrations in terms of what was considered administratively important. He suspected that "[academic] presidents paid more attention to details than the others . . . [and were] concerned more about what was going on in their academic departments."

Each president did acknowledge that the nature of the institution was also directly affected by the physical plant. Any major geographical separation between facilities housing degree and non-degree programming served to make leadership of a unified college difficult. However one president suggested that physical separation could be used to accelerate the division of the college into two institutions if that was the president's vision.

Summary

There are numerous comments in this section but four key issues in support of this study's purpose should be highlighted. First is the recognition of the unique relationship between cabinet and caucus and the differing techniques

required for dealing with each including, but not limited to, "the art of selling." Second is the overwhelming acknowledgement of the extent and pervasiveness of the power of the Premier and the effect this had on ministerial behaviour. Next is the whole matter of bureaucratic influence. Those still in government argued for a role limited to expert advice and subtle diplomacy; those out of government, but still advising ministers, suggested a more partisan political role. Finally is the clear indication in the comments of the presidents that their philosophy and style is a significant determinant in the emerging character of their institutions. Although interesting in itself, this latter issue is important in any consideration of the role of leadership and power in the decision-making process.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

Within the context of the public policy process it was speculated that a private more political process was unfolding. In order to explore the extent to which electoral politics played a part in the decision to establish three university colleges, interviews were held with politicians, bureaucrats, and college presidents. The three key questions were: What are the considerations of political leaders in deciding on policy initiatives? To what extent do senior officials consider the political imperatives of politicians in recommending policy initiatives and/or implementation strategies? What are the impacts, if any, on policy outcomes of the intrusion of electoral politics into the policy decision-making process?

With these questions in mind, the following discussion will focus on the key issues summarized at the end of each section in the previous chapter. Included in this discussion will be a re-enunciation of the issue being considered with comments gleaned both from appropriate literature and my personal experience. The discussion will be organized by themes, as was Chapter 5.

Post-Secondary Education

While the comments of the study participants about post-secondary education were in most cases straightforward and self-explanatory requiring little analysis or expansion, they raise questions about the context in which decisions were made. As a result this section serves primarily to highlight key comments of participants about higher education and on occasion to indicate the relevance of such comments to current issues in the field.

The politicians varied in their knowledge of education issues but this was neither surprising nor unique. What was surprising was how little they knew about the specifics of the issue. As two ministers suggested, in most areas beyond one's own ministry, a minister generally relied on the expertise of the minister responsible or gleaned information from various media reports. For example, the abiding political concern about the cost of UNBC was as a direct result of the media focus on those expenditures. This focus directly affected the politicians' impressions of the worth of that project.

This matter of a minister's knowledge of a particular issue raises the question of individual influence. The more information a minister has the greater the potential to affect policy outcomes. In essence I would suggest the most

successful advancement of a minister's agenda, either to satisfy a constituency or personal ambition, results from being fully informed. The bureaucracy was aware of this and would on occasion seek to influence a cabinet decision by providing information to ministers other than their own. From their own comments and my personal experience, there is no question that such information sharing was frequently directed to the Premier's office. An informed Premier, sometimes with information beyond or different from that provided the minister, could quickly determine a policy outcome.

Of specific interest, although it confirmed commonly held beliefs, was the variance in support among the politicians for where the priority should be placed in educational reform generally. Where access to post-secondary programs was broad, in metropolitan areas primarily, the focus tended to be on the K-12 system. In non-metropolitan areas however, the primary concern was for increasing availability of course offerings beyond high school. Such concern was based not only on a demand for "equality of educational opportunity" but also on the need to stem the exodus of young people from the areas beyond the lower mainland and southern Vancouver Island and to stimulate and support economic activity.

The bureaucracy by its very nature is primarily concerned with details. While they briefed ministers on policy issues they withheld details until after a cabinet discussion. As a result ministry staff directed their comments on post-secondary education to the specific issues they had to resolve: funding; governance; and scholarly activity. It was exactly these details which continued to preoccupy large numbers of staff and yet, after four years of research, discussion, and debate, they still had no resolution. This is not surprising given that across North America these very concerns continue to confound educators. As Millard (1991) suggests all of these areas are "bound up in the 'myths' of higher education" (p. xiv). These myths he argues "have grown out of experience . . . [and] may contain some valid insights . . . [yet] taken at face value [they] inhibit effective action in meeting current needs" (p. xiv).

One comment by the bureaucrats interviewed did draw attention to the sometimes "defensive" nature of the bureaucracy. This was the need by several interviewees to counter the expertise and findings of minister-appointed committees and consultants by suggesting that much of the ongoing work of ministry staff would "have led to similar conclusions." This need reflected two concerns. First was the desire of the bureaucrats to ensure recognition of their policy development role in addition to their more widely accepted policy

implementation function. Second was the covert but real wish of the ministry to be positively profiled in the entire policy decision-making process.

These concerns were particularly evident in the bureaucratic references to the Provincial Access Committee that is credited with first recommending the establishment of university colleges. Several bureaucrats were concerned that such a positively viewed initiative if seen to have been developed outside the ministry would confirm the frequent impression of a non-innovative, uncreative, maintenance-oriented bureaucracy. Unfortunately for them, their protestations, at least in the minds of most politicians interviewed, did little to change that impression.

Not surprisingly the presidents were the most comfortable in their discussion of post-secondary education. Equally unsurprising was that their comments on the issues reflected their definition of and expectations for their individual institutions.

The favouring of degree programming over trades and technology resulted in greater support for traditional university funding, governance, and academic policies. Likewise those who supported a more comprehensive approach,

recognizing the importance of vocational training, argued for continuation of traditional college structures and a "capping," if necessary, of degree funding.

Each of these positions was presented by respective presidents as not only right but also easily substantiated in the literature. It is the seeming validity of each argument that perhaps explains the inability of the ministry to arrive at any acceptable solution to the outstanding issues. As Shaver (1990) argues, "It is difficult to establish system objectives that reflect individual institutions, given varying institutional goals" (p. 14).

There was however one significant point of agreement among the presidents. They agreed that the university colleges had an unprecedented opportunity to champion teaching excellence. The recent focusing by governments, the public, and universities themselves on the distinction between teaching and research, provided their colleges with the opening, they each declared, to establish the unqualified importance of high teaching standards within post-secondary education. To miss this opportunity, they believed, was not only to abdicate their responsibility to students but to also miss out on the defining of the uniqueness of the BC university colleges.

Their argument might be somewhat specious, however. To suggest that not only universities but indeed their own colleges had, prior to the university college decision, not been concerned with teaching excellence is not convincing. It is more likely the presidents' focus on teaching was simply a defense against the clear indication that their institutions would not have the traditional and more prestigious image of a university.

The presidents, like the politicians and bureaucrats, expressed their concern about the establishment of a university in Prince George. Their focus however was somewhat different. Uncertain as to the need for another traditional university anywhere in the province they were particularly mystified by the lack of uniqueness exhibited in the plans for UNBC. If a university was to be established in the north then surely its structure and programming would reflect the unusual requirements of a diverse and geographically dispersed population. Yet UNBC was being developed with all the trappings and priorities of a traditional university.

The presidents' concern and chagrin at the evolution of UNBC were shared by many others. In fact at the cabinet table and in the ministry similar views were being expressed. Why was the decision ultimately made? Perhaps

the discussion which follows will help answer that question.

Politics

The participants in this study commented frequently on politics and its impact on decision-making. At no time however, did I ask for or did anyone offer a definition of politics that would enable the establishment of a "level playing field" upon which an appropriate analysis could be constructed. In other words, I could not assume that what any one participant meant by "politics" was shared by any other. Each freely commented on political actors and actions, but caution was necessary in assuming agreement on a common underlying definition of politics.

This comes as no surprise since, as Jackson, Jackson, and Baxter-Moore (1986) suggest, there is no agreement in the literature as to an appropriate definition of politics. Their own definition was an attempt to combine the insights of two prominent writers: Lasswell (1936) and Easton (1965). Jackson, Jackson, and Baxter-Moore stated that politics "embraces all activity which impinges upon the making of binding decisions about who gets what, when, and how" (p. 8). Closely related to this and important for later discussion, is their contention that "power is central to the study of politics" (p. 8).

As I had entered into the interviews steeped in the arguments of public choice theory which indicated that politicians and public servants alike would be motivated by self-interest and vote maximization, I was somewhat surprised to discover early on that this did not seem to be the case in the minds of the politicians I interviewed. Each was adamant that concerns about their own re-election were minimal. In fact one argued eloquently for the existence of a common belief amongst all politicians in their own winability regardless of their policy decisions.

This apparent contradiction of public choice theory could be a product of two factors. First, the politicians belief in their own electability may well reflect a naivete, if not outright ignorance, about the mood and inclination of their constituency. Secondly, public choice theory fails to place the discussion of political motivation into a specific context, in this case the awareness, or lack thereof, a politician has of the electorate. The environment in which a politician is asked to consider motivation is key to determining the existence and/or nature of self-interest.

Within the context of a firm belief in certain re-election, the politicians interviewed for this study rejected self-interest as significant. They continued to

minimize the importance of electoral advantage rejecting, for example, the notion of deferring a decision until election time, arguing that immediate action was more appropriate. In addition, this continuing belief in their own electability, at least at the time, mitigated against any long term concern about vote-getting.

This lack of concern regarding re-election was inevitably cast by the politicians as an altruistic act reflecting their overriding concern for the best interests of the people. There is, nevertheless, evidence not only in their comments but also in my personal experience to suggest that their motivation came less from future electoral self-interest and more from a perceived immediate payback for acting now: a sense of "doing what was right" and the personal satisfaction that gave.

Right is a difficult word to define. At its simplest it is that which is opposite to wrong. To avoid this circular trap I have cast right for this study within the realm of moral imperatives. In an essay on such imperatives McQuarrie (1991) suggests that they are "actions or positions characterized by being ethical, honest, principled, and responsible" (p. 23). He goes on to suggest that such actions or positions must be "recognized as being responsible" (p. 23). McQuarrie's description and acknowledgement of recognition capture for me the

essence of right as used by politicians within the context of this study.

Throughout my experience working with cabinet ministers and Premiers, most intimately in BC but also in other jurisdictions, I was constantly impressed by the intrinsic force of the political leader believing he/she was doing the right thing. Great pride was taken in explaining the courage required to pursue those courses which would seem fraught with danger but were necessary in order to accomplish what was right.

Doing the right thing has played a prominent role in the discussion of executive leadership since early in this century. In describing executive responsibility, Barnard (1938) argues that officials can function effectively only if "they personally believe [what they are doing] is right" (p. 281). Likewise, in a detailed treatise on leadership as a moral art, Hodgkinson (1991) suggests that leaders are motivated by those personal values (defined by Hodgkinson as "concepts of the desirable" (p. 89)) they "believe to be right" (p. 93). Not to be limited to business and educational leadership, O'Sullivan (1986) brought the concept directly into the political realm when he suggested that the Prime Minister (referring to Brian Mulroney), not unlike most of his colleagues in the House of Commons, was motivated by "traditional values and wanting to do the

right thing" (p. 221).

To the politician doing the right thing was altruism at its best. Yet my own experience working with politicians and their own comments suggested this is not a sufficient explanation. I would argue for an interpretation that is more selfish than altruistic but nevertheless equally essential.

It was essential because it provided often the only comfort in what was frequently an isolated existence. This sense of isolation was highlighted recently by the comments in a televised interview of former Prime Minister Campbell, who expressed, with considerable emotion, how lonely she found her life in Ottawa to be. Since it seemed impossible for a politician to make any decision that would receive widespread support, knowing one was doing the right thing lessened the pain of the inevitable attacks. As evidence of this I was struck, in the course of my interviews, by the genuine delight and relief of these politicians that the university college initiative received almost universal support. In this case, for them "good public policy" was not so much "good politics" but more an opportunity for "good feelings" and a chance to relax personal defences.

One of the politicians interviewed indicated he was a victim of this

commitment to doing what was right while still acknowledging the comfort it gave him. All through his time as a cabinet minister he had, not unlike other ministers, been forced to rule on the appropriateness of the programs of his colleagues. Since his responsibilities were broad and his decisions were often contrary to the popular wish, he was frequently isolated. As in the previous examples it was the belief that he was doing the right thing that sustained him. However he argues that ultimately, as comforting as this was, it was not enough to avoid electoral defeat.

One final observation, drawn from my own intimate experience in working with defeated politicians, on this explanation of politician motivation. Personal survival after political defeat is possible only if the politician has been able to separate the politics from the "real" person. In other words, one cannot allow political crusades, no matter how right, to be the defining aspect of one's character. If your identification is wrapped up in you as a politician, electoral defeat will destroy not only your political life but, quite likely, the rest of your life as well.

Another aspect of political motivation raised by the findings of this research was the entire matter of cabinet/caucus perceptions and interactions. I

was interested in the apparent disparity identified in the priority of electoral consideration by each group. The politicians interviewed, each of whom was a cabinet minister, clearly saw their role as one governed by broad public interest while they viewed the caucus as being more concerned about re-electability. Interestingly only one of the four ministers interviewed had ever served as a non-cabinet member of caucus.

Is this disparity surprising? Cabinet ministers were easily able to provide direct benefit to their constituencies by virtue of their position and access to resources. Their caucus colleagues on the other hand were almost totally reliant on the benevolence of cabinet ministers to ensure benefit to their constituencies. It was difficult for a caucus member to accept the non-electoral motivation espoused by ministers if at the same time his/her constituency was suffering for lack of government attention in contrast to others. Once again the need for a context in which to apply any discussion of motivation or self-interest is apparent.

Upon reviewing the comments of both the bureaucrats and presidents interviewed, as they related to decision-making, it can be suggested that an explanation of motivation similar to that applied to ministers can be applied to them. Where they were having to decide on a recommendation or direction that

by its nature was controversial, they frequently took comfort in the rightness of their decision. One president, for example, defended his rather arbitrary approach to gaining designation as a university college by arguing it was the only means by which he could accomplish what was right for his college and community. Others might wish to argue that his action could be attributed simply to self-interest.

Likewise, the comments offered by several senior bureaucrats about their interaction with ministers and/or cabinet support the argument. Deputy ministers who had provided advice to ministers which was disregarded indicated they had comforted themselves with the knowledge that they had offered information they believed to be right. Not having "carried the day" was a measure not of the rightness of their counsel, but of factors beyond their control. Interestingly these bureaucrats would often identify as primary among these factors, the interference of politics. Yet my argument suggests that it was in fact simply the meeting of one perceived rightness with another. By implication therefore the ultimate decision resulted from the political reality in that one's position in the hierarchy not rightness of opinion, determined the outcome.

My argument is not challenged by senior bureaucrats pointing to politics

as a determinant in policy decision-making. As MacDonald (1980) has suggested this deference to political considerations by the bureaucracy is often a defense against admitting that the politicians have come up with an equally right alternative to their recommendations. Even more negatively, Pattison (1987), in his autobiography written after his Expo '86 experience, rails against the unwillingness of public servants to defer to the contrary decisions of politicians and their constant patronizing assumption of political motivation.

Senior bureaucrats were not alone in this deference to politics as an explanation for certain policy decisions. All those I interviewed advanced politics as the deciding factor in the decision to proceed with the university in Prince George. Furthermore, as the rightness argument would suggest, this political motivation was attributed to those who favoured the establishment of UNBC, such as the Interior University Society, and were convinced it was the right and only decision for northern BC. Yet there was no evidence to suggest that there was any electoral advantage to those supporting UNBC since the issue crossed partisan lines.

Worth noting is the willingness of those who were on the losing side of a decision to consistently attribute their defeat to electoral politics. It is beyond

the scope of this study and clearly needs further research but it would seem, and the popular media would appear to confirm this, that negative outcomes are ascribed to partisan politics while good decisions are categorized as a result of individuals doing what is right.

Bureaucracy

As I investigated bureaucracy, particularly bureaucratic/political relationships, through the interviews conducted for this study, I expected to confirm the findings of my examination into such relationships as presented in my Master's research. In that study I concluded, confirmed by the comments of politicians and bureaucrats interviewed at that time, that there was a form of "collusion," as Borins (1988) has suggested, between senior public servants and cabinet ministers, specifically in terms of the implementation strategy developed in response to the Sullivan Royal Commission into education. My current research has caused me to reflect on those findings and I now wonder if the cynicism of the politicians' comments were more affected by their then recent electoral defeat (in the Fall of 1991) than I originally had allowed.

In any case, the comments from politicians and bureaucrats alike in this study would seem to dispel this rather negative conclusion, replacing it with the

more optimistic concept of trust. Both groups in fact identified a "trusting relationship" as the most critical element of a successful and effective working arrangement between minister and deputy. This declaration was of course not new, having been acknowledged in the literature for decades (Blakeney, 1972; Osbaldeston, 1989). What was interesting was the bureaucrats' deference to trust when required to accept the minister's involvement in everyday administrative matters if this were the latter's style.

Such involvement was not the wish of every minister. Those in this study agreed that they should avoid intrusion into the administrative purview of the deputy. Some however admitted to involvement in the details of implementing new initiatives. Others suggested their previous work experience made it difficult for them to avoid "meddling" in operational matters. None of the participants offered a means of determining the appropriate limits of ministerial involvement, but other politicians have suggested personal experience would seem to be the determining factor. MacDonald (1980), as a novice politician with no public service background, argues for greater ministerial participation in departmental administration, while Sharp (1981), an experienced cabinet minister who himself had been a deputy minister, suggests that more be delegated to the bureaucracy allowing for more reflection time by the politicians. All the ministers interviewed

in this study had been in cabinet for no longer than one term.

Whatever the extent of involvement, the bureaucrats' comments reflected a surprisingly accommodating attitude towards their minister's participation. Most referred to the trust inherent in their relationship to mitigate against any serious problems or disagreements. In fact both deputies and ministers indicated that without this trust their continuing working relationship, regardless of who was involved administratively, was doomed.

The question is begged, however, as to the nature of this trusting relationship. The findings suggest that such trust was clearly only one-way, either minister of deputy or deputy of minister, and role related. Mutual, co-existent, personal trust was tentative at best. This was not a marriage but simply an uneasy co-habitation. Each party was aware of the fragility of the relationship, yet each was also aware that for either party to function at all some sort of partnership needed to be maintained.

This need for a partnership between minister and deputy allowed for agreement on "agenda control" (defined by Altfeld and Miller (1984), as the ability to control what is debated by voting bodies), even though each group

expressed their views of it somewhat differently. Ministers tended to see this as an aggressive requirement of their leadership role necessitating, as one suggested, the minister "to be on his toes" in working with the bureaucracy to establish legislative priorities. On the other hand, the deputies referred to a more flexible approach in attempting to determine "agenda" items, relying primarily on expert knowledge to influence the prioritization of initiatives. Each group, however, did acknowledge that the ultimate decision fell to the minister.

Yet the bureaucracy also experienced some frustration at not being privy to the discussion on an issue occurring in both cabinet and caucus. While not wishing to compromise their political neutrality the bureaucrats expressed some concern that the debates in cabinet and caucus could, because of their potentially political nature, undermine the soundness of their recommendations and directly alter the agenda. The bureaucrat's frustration was aggravated by the apparent assumption of the government caucus that they seldom required bureaucratic briefing. This was in sharp contrast to the opposition caucus who were starved for information and welcomed such briefings, yet had little agenda control.

Whatever the context, this entire matter of agenda control is critical to an understanding of leadership and power, some issues of which we will examine in

a later section. Suffice it to say that by frequently limiting their influence on agenda priorities to expertise, with even that often compromised through minimal access to cabinet and caucus, and by appearing uncompromised by the resulting ministerial control of the agenda, the bureaucracy ended up appearing to have willingly given up considerable "influence . . . and control of decision-making" (Altfeld & Miller, 1984, p. 701).

On a different aspect of bureaucratic process, the interviews pointed to agreement amongst all groups--politicians, bureaucrats, and presidents--that regardless of the initiative, the bureaucracy dealt with each in the same structural manner, once a decision had been made. By this I mean the same procedures for developing implementation strategies, communicating alternatives, seeking input, and prompting discussion were employed regardless of the bureaucrat's opinion of the particular initiative. As evidence of this, each group pointed to the equal effort expended in proceeding with both the university colleges and UNBC undertakings despite the variance in bureaucratic support between the two decisions.

My own experience as chair of the deputies committee in BC for two years confirmed this "equality" of effort by senior public servants. In fact, and

supported by the comments of several interviewees, when the deputies were included in the development of cross-government policies they brought to the discussion information on both sides of an issue regardless of their personal assessment of the proposed initiative. Such openness was not accomplished without effort, however, since a history in BC of closed and secret policy discussion had led to leadership strategies that would protect "turf." Deputies had been unwilling to share expertise for fear of reprisal if such suggestions were not in keeping with what was perceived to be a "hidden" agenda (i.e., predetermined objectives and outcomes by the senior echelons of the Premier's office).

The presidents had very little to say about the bureaucracy except to concur with the "structural equality" noted above. From my experience within the college system and from conversations with many college presidents over the years, including those interviewed for this study, I suggest this reluctance can be attributed to a number of things.

First, when an item under consideration is ultimately to be decided by politicians, presidents tend to defer to their board members (assuming a board-governed structure) to argue their college's position. After all, in most instances, the board members have been appointed by the cabinet. This strategy serves both

to recognize and endorse the existing college governance hierarchy and to underline the political neutrality of the senior college bureaucrat, the president.

Secondly, and not unrelated to the first, is a concern that as the "influencing of the minister" is underway, any detailed discussion with the ministry bureaucracy of the college's plan could undermine the strategy of first gaining ministerial support. The fear was that revealing college strategy to the ministry while seeking ministerial support could result in better informed efforts by the bureaucracy to undermine that support or at least compromise it. One president interviewed confirmed this very concern and indicated he had used this minister first, ministry second approach in obtaining initial approval to become a university college.

Finally, there seems to be a pervasive feeling of scepticism towards the overall ability of the bureaucracy to maintain confidentiality. As a result, presidents tend to keep their intentions as "close to the chest" as possible to avoid theft of their ideas by other institutions. Such an approach was not limited to the government bureaucracy but was also evident in dealings with other agencies and institutions.

Leadership

The aspects of leadership that impact on decision-making have proven to be as important to this study as has the examination of the applicability of public choice theory. Numerous comments made by those interviewed offered some insight into different perspectives of power and control and the influence of others on both their own behaviour and the decision-making process.

For example, the cabinet ministers interviewed expressed, at some length, the considerable effect the caucus had on their actions. Not so much attributing it power to affect their motivation as giving it the credit for altering their outwardly visible behaviour, it was in this context that one politician referred to his interaction with the caucus MLAs as a "selling job." Although such a connotation was offered with somewhat humorous and exaggerated intent, it was revealing in the aptness of its description to much of political posturing.

I would argue to win an election much of what a politician does is "sell." Whatever the motivation for decision-making once elected, when it comes to winning elections we are talking about conducting a sales campaign, not an effort to persuade. Such a campaign is most often focused on "the [candidate's] ability to be convincing on television" (Laschinger & Stevens, 1992, p. 7). This single

attribute is key in these authors' minds not only to initial election but is bound up in maintaining a positive image. It is no surprise, therefore, that such an ability is cultivated by most politicians.

To be convincing on television is to be viewed as being believable, which is fundamental to selling. It is also fundamental to the attention one gets. The greater believability and the more effective the selling, the broader the attention by the media. Increased media attention results in perceived increased influence by both the public and fellow politicians. In other words you have more power.

But selling is not limited to a politician's television ability. As has been suggested it is a technique used often by cabinet ministers to appease the caucus. Furthermore it has been identified as an essential tool in the manipulation of constituents. It is also an important part of a ministers preparation for a cabinet decision as he/she coaches his/her colleagues in advance. Selling is a key aspect of political leadership!

Leadership theory as reflected in much of the literature would seem to support the foregoing. Although the terminology is different the arguments of Weber (1947) in support of charismatic domination, the descriptions of today's

executive by Moss Kanter (1989) as "bargainers, negotiators and sellers of ideas" (p. 90), and the approaches of "management's new gurus" (Business Week, August 1992) centred on networking and communicating, all point to the continuing importance of selling as a critical leadership skill.

In the case of politicians, however, selling techniques are most likely to be used in interaction with their political colleagues. What of the everyday operation of government: the interaction between these politicians and the bureaucracy; among the ministers in cabinet; and between the cabinet and the Premier? Each of these has a different dynamic at play.

As ministers interact, both the comments of those interviewed and my own experience suggest a camaraderie on one hand as they each struggle for political survival and a defensive isolation on the other as they each struggle to maintain control of their individual responsibilities. There is little sharing between ministers on substantial ministry business. This was saved for interaction with the bureaucracy. As Chretien (1985) has suggested, "Seldom do you spend much time [outside cabinet or committee] with your cabinet colleagues" (p. 73). It is more likely, he argues, that a cabinet minister will "establish a closer relationship with officials" (p. 71).

Such interaction was essential to the effective running of the ministry, but existed successfully only when, as was discussed earlier, some level of trust had been established between minister and deputy. As Osbaldeston (1989) argues, "A mutual dependence is inherent in the successful minister/deputy relationship. It is needed to move [departmental] policies and programs through [government]" (p. 29). The awareness of the critical nature of this relationship and its importance in sustaining effective leadership in the development and implementation of policy was discussed earlier. The apparent lack of its adoption by both the politicians and bureaucrats interviewed for this study does not decrease its significance. Likewise, the importance of political/bureaucratic relationship in providing appropriate policy leadership has also been raised by McDonnell and Elmore (1987) in their research into the question of the impact of different leadership strategies on the advancement of different policy instruments.

The interaction in cabinet between ministers and the Premier was quite different as both participant interviews and my personal experience indicate. At some length, the politicians interviewed described the power of the Premier, referring to the influence on the decision-making process of something as simple as a "gesture or frown." Clearly these politicians were aware of the need to have

the Premier's support if they wished to gain approval for their position. Some tried to influence that support by employing media coverage of an issue prior to a cabinet decision and getting the Premier to declare his stand publicly. Others would encourage caucus lobbying of the Premier before cabinet consideration hoping to affect his stance. None, however, questioned the Premier's ultimate, absolute "veto" power.

It is, however, unfortunate in my experience that so many politicians attempt to define their leadership simply by shadowing and obliging the Premier. As Chretien (1985) suggests throughout his book, such behaviour might result in short term gain but to be an effective leader you "needed to be independent . . . and remain your own man" (p. 74).

Many theories of leadership describe characteristics essential to being an effective leader (Fairholm & Fairholm, 1984; Javidan, 1991; Tauber, 1985). Two characteristics are common to several of these theories. Although sometimes labelled differently, they refer to expertise and agenda control. This latter aspect of leadership has been mentioned before, but deserves a little more discussion here.

Earlier it was suggested that bureaucrats relinquish control of the agenda to the politicians and by doing so give up considerable power. Is this in fact true? There can be little question, from the extensive comments of those interviewed, that the decision as to policy priorities rests with the minister. However further reading of the comments would suggest since the ministers rely on the bureaucracy for information in establishing those priorities that the influence of the bureaucrats is considerable. Not unlike James Hacker in Yes Minister, many ministers are "struck by their dependence on civil servants" (p. 19). Or as MacDonald (1980) complained, "They are at the mercy of bureaucratic domination" (p. 29).

This bureaucratic influence is further supported by the frustration of some ministers that try as they might to control the agenda, ultimately they have only one primary source for informed agenda items. This weighted advantage to the bureaucrats may help explain the calm demeanour of the deputies interviewed when they described their role as that of "a neutral advisor" (their emphasis).

Politicians can spend an incredible amount of time discussing political strategies and generally believe that voluminous talk indicates political expertise and constitutes political leadership. One interviewee suggested, however, that in

reality their political judgement was not "all that good." In fact these politicians need for their political decisions, as they do for all their actions, reassurance that they are doing well. The profusion of political polls would bear this out. Bennett (1980) dramatically illustrates this in a detailed description of the personal reliance U.S. President Carter had on opinion polls and his obsessive need for them to indicate support for his actions.

Another form of political reassurance is found in the comments of one bureaucrat who was now doing consulting for ministers. He argued that in addition to the particular subject expertise he possessed, an equally important role was to offer political advice and comfort. He further suggested that by doing this he facilitated the avoidance of a partisan political interaction between minister and deputy aiding in the potential establishment of that all important trust relationship.

Another aspect of leadership was revealed in the interviews with the college presidents. As discussed, the arguments and decisions of each president were a reflection of their vision for their college. Furthermore, it has been argued the structure and personnel of each institution likewise reflected the uniqueness of the president's perspective. Clearly, the future nature of the individual colleges would mirror the leadership of this one person. As Johnston

(1990) concludes after a selective review of the literature on the president's effect on the culture of his or her institution, "The president plays the most important role . . . in setting the college climate" (p. 15). The comments of interviewees in this study support this, as several noted that the character of an educational institution, and many other institutions for that matter (Barnard, 1938; Simon, 1945) would seem to be "the reflection of one person." This reinforces the notion that the leadership style of the senior staff person critically influences the future personality and reputation of the institution.

Finally, a comment on power. This study has touched on elements of power, particularly as they relate to the Premier. Much more research is needed into this aspect of political leadership. If Nyberg (1988) is correct in suggesting that all power is dependent upon followers deferring to that power then investigation into the Premier/cabinet/caucus relationship offers potentially fruitful results.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY

This study set out to examine the more private political and bureaucratic decision-making routines that impacted on the establishment in British Columbia of three university colleges in the fall of 1989. To this end a number of former cabinet ministers, former and current bureaucrats, and the three initial university college presidents were interviewed. The interviews were loosely structured but in each case questions that would allow later analysis of public choice theory, politician/bureaucrat relationships and leadership were asked. A number of other areas including post-secondary education were touched on in the course of the interviews.

In order to determine the differences inherent in a private process, a review of documents, Hansard transcripts, and press reports that defined the public process was undertaken. This review and comments on the process it described were intended to allow the reader to understand more readily the intricacies and subtleties of the private process as they differed from the public process.

Another critical source of data utilized was my own experience as a political advisor and senior deputy minister in the Vander Zalm administration in BC. This latter input served both to provide anecdotal evidence and to clarify or expand participant comments. It is possible, however, that my personal relationship with most of those interviewed interfered with the objectivity of this study. Yet, this intimacy perhaps resulted in more expansive and revealing comments by interviewees.

The organization of the study has placed considerable emphasis on two aspects of the input. One is the insights offered by those interviewed into how decisions were made and their participation in the process. The second is a personal search for those meanings which will help explain previously ignored or ill-described behaviour. As a result this paper has, I hope, become a story of one person's perspective of the political/bureaucratic decision-making process, at least in the BC context at a particular time in its history.

At the very beginning of this paper three questions were asked. Have those questions been answered?

The first question queried the considerations of political leaders in

deciding on policy initiatives. In answer to this a number of comments were made by participants. However the expected response that such initiatives were decided frequently on electoral grounds was never made. In fact it was suggested that the contrary was true. Some politicians adhered to the principle of acting in the best interests of the people regardless of electoral considerations. The altruism of this motivation has been challenged in this paper but the lack of an electoral motivation has not.

The next question asked about the influence of political imperatives on senior bureaucrats in recommending policy initiatives and/or implementation strategies. None of those interviewed were offended by the suggestion that deputy ministers needed to be sympathetic to the political reality of a cabinet minister's life and cognizant of those pressures in formulating recommendations. However there was no indication that senior officials of the ministry should be adherents to a specific partisan point of view. Several participants indicated there were other mechanisms for politicians to receive political advice and reassurance. Furthermore, technical expertise and the ability to control the strategic details of an issue allowed the bureaucracy to significantly influence policy outcomes.

The third question addressed the issue of electoral politics intruding into

the policy decision-making process. It would seem from the comments made, if taken at face value, that although no such intrusion was evident in the university college decision, the same could not be said of the UNBC initiative. However upon more detailed analysis, it became clear that perhaps this accusation of electoral influence was exaggerated and in fact no such intrusion occurred in either case. Overall it was difficult from the data accumulated in this study to attribute electoral advantage as either a motive for, or an influence on, the bureaucratic/political decision-making process--an apparent contradiction of the basic tenets of public choice theory.

Is this a contextual challenge of public choice? Given the extensive public process (however focused) and the universal, apolitical support of the university college initiative was electoral concern simply unnecessary? Would a more rushed, private decision-making process cause politicians and bureaucrats alike to be far more concerned about electoral impact?

Has the study been useful? Besides its sometimes cathartic benefit for me, I would hope that it has proved beneficial in a number of ways.

It may have challenged some commonly held views about the political

decision-making process and suggested a more positive aura to government. I am continually frustrated and disappointed by the persistent criticism and attacks on elected officials. Having worked closely with many of them, served as one myself, and now having studied them I am convinced that they are frequently misunderstood. Regardless of whether their actions are altruistic, there is no question that most politicians are gaining little substantial fiscal reward for their service, nor as some critics would have you believe, serving only to ensure themselves a secure future.

As the interviews in this study showed, elected officials are generally trying as best they can to improve the community in which they live. They may have large egos and a need for immediate gratification but much of this comes as a defence to the constant barrage of criticism and condemnation. Expectations that these one-time business operators, sales persons, or service workers can somehow instantly change deep-rooted social and economic problems simply as a result of election are, at the very least, inappropriate. I have watched more than one cabinet minister, upon being sworn in, physically recoil from the immediate demand for intelligent decisions on complex portfolio matters. If the findings and discussion of this paper have helped elevate the respect for politicians than this research has been useful.

Perhaps this study has also elevated the reader's opinion of the public service. Too often this group of dedicated, hard-working men and women is inappropriately maligned and chastised. Given the pace and variety of demands placed upon them they should not be considered the antithesis of the entrepreneur but more properly as a positive role model. Each day brings to the senior levels of the bureaucracy a wide variety of challenges. Not the least of these, as the interviews identified, is the continuing need to satisfy diverse constituencies. On one hand is a minister who expects not only sound and politically astute advice but total loyalty as well. On another is a large staff who expects visionary leadership and wise counsel. Finally there is the general public who assume the senior bureaucrat is safeguarding the public interest in the face of competing political and ideological assault. If the findings and discussion of this paper have led to a better understanding of the complexity and demands of the public service than this research has been useful.

Public servants may well learn from this study as well. For those who are somewhat removed from the direct interaction of politician and bureaucrat some insight may have been gained into aspects of that relationship. Particularly interesting was the frequent reference to the importance of trust, albeit with varied and incomplete descriptions, by each politician and bureaucrat interviewed.

To those who know only too well the challenges of working with political leaders, some comfort may have been attained with the realization that they do not struggle alone. Finally, I hope that those who research and write about public service, in its many incarnations, will have obtained a new perspective on the complexity of its undertakings.

I expect that politicians who might read this study will achieve an even greater understanding of the role played by the bureaucracy and the essential nature of the relationship between themselves and senior public servants. I do hope they will find, in addition to an occasional chuckle, some ideas that cause them to reflect upon their personal motivation and political understandings.

For some this study may have provided new information about the ever-changing nature of post-secondary education, and triggered further thought about alternative delivery structures for degree programs. For educational administrators, I am sure, descriptions of process and strategy leading to the three colleges gaining degree-granting status will prove interesting. Equally engaging for them, however, will be the comments of presidents on the impact on their institutions of their particular leadership style.

If the politicians, bureaucrats, and educators referred to above have learned from this paper or even been stimulated to disagree than this research has been useful.

All of the foregoing refer to the implications of this study for practical application, but what of the implications for further research?

The basic premise of public choice theory has been challenged but by no means disproved. Some may argue that the indication that politicians are seeking immediate gratification for doing the right thing is but one step in a process that culminates in longer-term electoral success. The evidence provided in this research would disagree with this contention but further research might prove enlightening.

Likewise, the arguments presented in this paper that there is no collusion between politicians and bureaucrats in the development of policy and in decision-making could be examined by further research. As I indicated this outcome is contrary to what I discovered in the course of my Master's research. The door is clearly open for further investigation and debate. Specific enquiry into the variance in politician/bureaucrat interaction when ministerial experience increases

could prove interesting. If such enquiry is stimulated by this paper than this research has been useful.

Also, as previously suggested, it is hoped that from the numerous comments included in the findings new areas of research may be stimulated, particularly in the area of political/bureaucratic decision-making. It would be interesting to examine other levels of government and even other jurisdictions to determine if there is a commonality to the process for decision-making identified in this paper. Are there political environments in which electoral concern is dominant? In which bureaucrats are totally in charge? In which there is collusion between elected and non-elected officials? The list goes on!

If someone upon reading this paper is moved to do such enquiry than this research has been useful.

One final comment on this study's possible usefulness. As expressed in the early pages of the document, it was my intention that those who interacted with government, for fun or profit, might find the thoughts and suggestions included herein helpful in conducting those meetings. Hopefully that is the case. However, I must admit that although all the tactics and strategies I encountered

throughout my years in political and bureaucratic service were useful, nothing was more valuable than having a sense of humour. Just maybe a hint of that comes through in this study as well.

If it has then this research has indeed been useful!

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APPENDIX

Summary of Documents

ACCESS REPORTS - 11, including: 8 regional committee reports; 2 reports on interior university.

BRIEFING NOTES/BACKGROUND PAPERS - 15

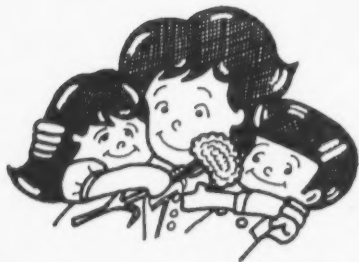
COLLEGE GENERATED REPORTS - 12, including 2 reports by faculty associations.

PRIVATE CORRESPONDENCE - 14, including 10 ministry/minister/institution letters; 3 internal institution memos; 1 internal ministry memo.

PRESS RELEASES - 3

SPEECHES - 3

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